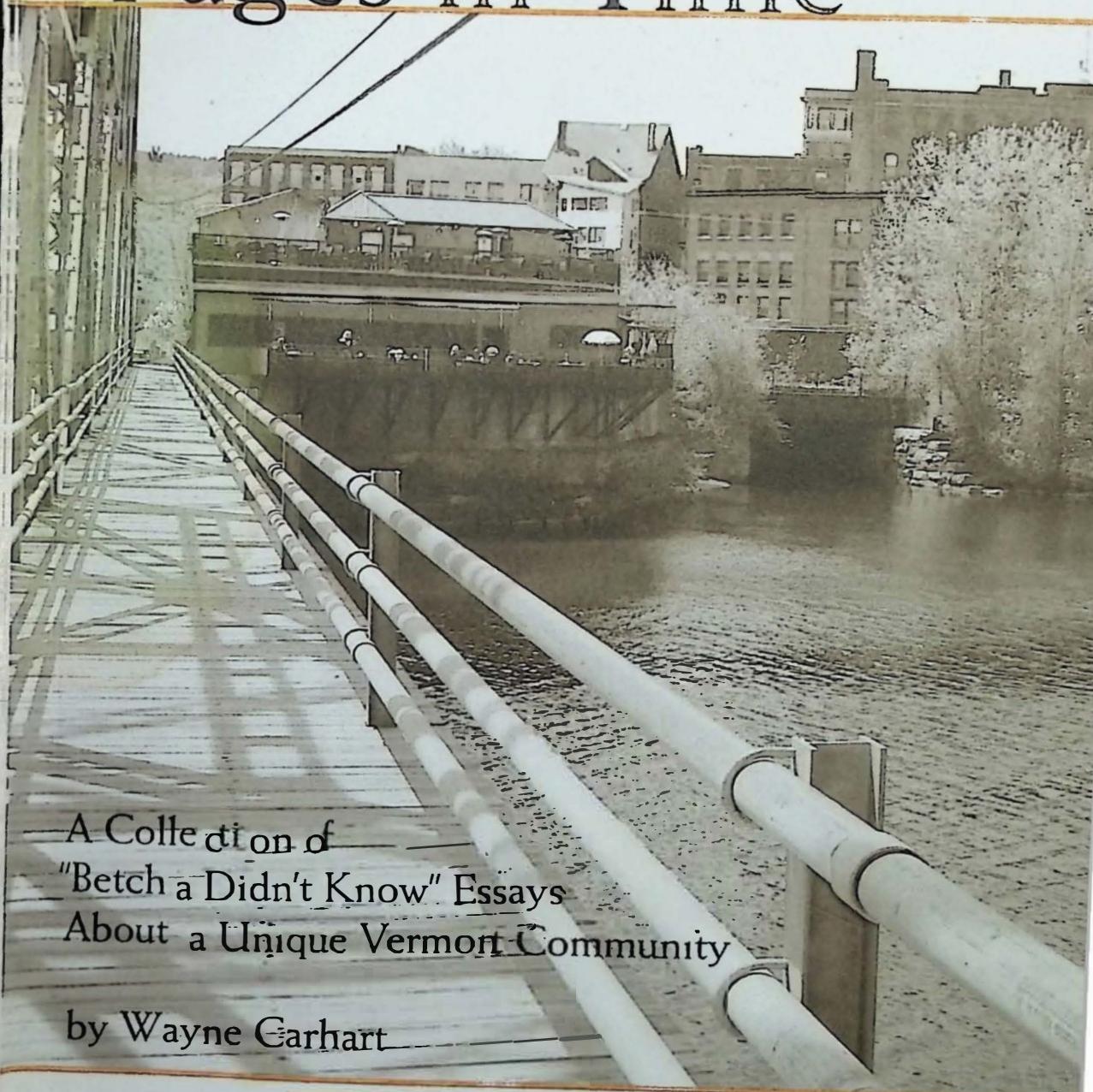


# Brattleboro: Pages in Time



A Collection of  
"Betch a Didn't Know" Essays  
About a Unique Vermont Community

by Wayne Garhart



Published by  
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*Celebrating 100 Years as The Voice of Business for Greater Brattleboro*



. the cover:

*River Crossing to Brattleboro*

Photograph by Gregory Lesch

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The Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1906. As we take first steps into our second 100 years, we acknowledge the century of progress we've made and dedicate ourselves to advancing a new century of promise — for business and, indeed, for the whole Brattleboro community.

*Brattleboro: Pages in Time* marks this year of reflection and celebration. Its publication would not have been possible were it not for the encouragement and support of two families who have defined community in most elegant ways for generations.

The Brattleboro Area Chamber is most grateful to Stephen E. Baker, Chamber Person of the Year 1987, who with this volume of historical gems honors his father, the late James F. Baker, Person of the Year 1978; and to Person of the Year 2003 Richard J. Fleming, Jr., who honors his father and our Person of the Year 1998, Richard J. Fleming, Sr.

*Jerry Goldberg*

*Executive Director*

*Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce*

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## Building in Brattleboro's Semi-Quincentennial Year

There was much debate in Brattleboro concerning some of the town's major construction projects: the park at the corner of Main and High Streets, the Main Street Bridge, the Transportation Center, the Brattleboro Union High School, and the Chesterfield Bridge. Since such projects involved design and funding decisions, the debate was lively at times, resulting in many letters to the editor of the Brattleboro Reformer; however, none of these undertakings were new to Brattleboro. The park at the corner of Main and High Streets is the fourth building project at that site, the Chesterfield Bridge was an additional span to an existing bridge, and that bridge was a replacement of an earlier one, as was the Main Street Bridge. The Main Street Bridge that was in place in 1869 was destroyed by a major flood of the Whetstone Brook. And the Transportation Center was not the first parking facility in the town. In the early 1900s, there was one on Flat Street where the Latchis Hotel complex is located and two more on High Street. The Brattleboro Union High School project was a major upgrading of the existing facility, built in 1951 as part of the centralized regional school movement that eliminated small neighborhood high schools.

Prior to the Connecticut River bridges (the first one was built leading to Hinsdale, N.H., in 1804) there were ferry boats, and most roads were not paved. Livery stables served the horse and buggy, and small community schools dotted the landscape. The arrival of the railroad in 1849 and the automobile in the early 1900s changed much of the way things were done and the automobile played an ever more prominent role.

The automobile's needs dictated the size and type of road that was built and the parking space required. It was the automobile in the form of school busses that enabled the creation of the centralized school systems.

The automobile was responsible for the development of the shopping mall and strip development. Putney Road development and box stores exist because parking is offered.

By 2003, Brattleboro had reached a point in its history when much of its infrastructure was in place: sewer, water, electricity, telephone, schools, railroad, and highways. The last major new construction was the interstate highway, I-91, another automobile-centered project. But that was almost 50 years ago. The projects that Brattleboro dealt with in its

semiquincentennial year (2003) were upgrades; however, there have been a few projects that seem to have cycled out of existence.

The trolley, built in 1895, was replaced by buses in 1923. The Dunkin' Donuts on the corner of Main and High Streets moved to Putney Road. The West River Railroad no longer functions. Brattleboro is on its third railroad station and that is shared with a museum. The manufactured gas, used for home and street lighting, was produced at the gasworks down by the railroad station. All that is left is the gasworks building. Public Works crews, when working beneath Brattleboro's streets, often uncover the old gas mains, a reminder of an earlier time. The Brattleboro House, a hotel at the foot of Main Street, was razed in 1913 to create Plaza Park, which many years later was threatened by plans for an enlarged traffic intersection.

The one truly new addition to Brattleboro, and one that would appear not to be automobile-related, is the foot bridge crossing the Whetstone Brook. It does, however, connect one automobile parking lot to another.

## Brattleboro's All Purpose Armory Is Created

**T**he role of a volunteer militia in Brattleboro has evolved over the years to what is today. The Vermont Army National Guard is headquartered in Westminster, Vermont. Brattleboro's role in military affairs began at the military post known as Fort Dummer constructed in 1724.

In the mid-1800s, when the Union Army needed more men for the Civil War effort, Brattleboro became a mustering-in site for all of Vermont. This operation, along with a hospital, took place at what was once the Valley Fair grounds and is now the location of the Brattleboro Union High School and the Department of Public Works. After the Civil War, the Vermont Militia was restructured, and in 1871, Company I was formed in Brattleboro. There was another reorganization in 1874 and the local military operation became the Estey Guard and Fuller Battery. Most of the resources for this new organization came from Levi K. Fuller, an Estey Organ Company principal and later governor of the State of Vermont. It was during Fuller's tenure that the guard was turned over to the state.

State guards played a major role in keeping labor peace during the last half of the nineteenth century. Events such as the 1877 railroad strike and the Haymarket Affair, a strike against the McCormick Harvester Company which resulted in riots, caused the guard to be called out to

restore order since local police forces were ill equipped to do the job. According to Robert M. Fogelson's book *American Armories*, state militias were also called to put down bread riots, theater riots, election-day riots, and anti-abolitionist riots.

The real or perceived need for a local military force was popular during this period of American history, so it was not surprising that the construction of buildings to house the equipment and provide space for drill and rifle practice took place. New York State led the way when the state legislature, in 1884, established an Armory Board, later the State Armory Commission, to fund the construction of armories. Other states followed suit including Vermont, and the Vermont Armory Commission was created. Armories were to be constructed where there was the greatest need; however, in 1903, state guards lost most of their autonomy with the passage of the federal government's Dick Act, named after Congressman Charles Dick of Ohio, making local guards accountable to both state and federal governments.

Brattleboro's armory, now the Gibson-Aiken Center, located on Brattleboro's Main Street, came about as part of this national phenomenon and Brattleboro's political forces joining together shortly after World War One ended on November 11, 1918. A group of concerned Brattleboro citizens was formed to explore the possibility of creating a memorial for those who served in World War One. At the time, there was also a need to provide space for the Vermont Guard to house their equipment and conduct drills. The Brattleboro High School was looking for space for a gymnasium and many civic organizations were looking for some type of facility in which to meet and hold social events. In 1920, the idea of creating one building that would serve all these needs received much support. Patriotic feeling was strong, there was a legitimate need in Brattleboro for such a building, and there were considerable resources available for the project. In other words, the timing was right.

According to articles written for the *Brattleboro Reformer* at the time, the funding for the project was secured as follows: \$15,000 from the War Chest Fund (a fund established in Brattleboro for the war effort of W.W.I), \$50,000 from the State of Vermont armory appropriation fund, a Town of Brattleboro appropriation of \$40,000, which included a \$10,000 armory site appropriation voted in 1911. In addition, Mr. and Mrs. George L. Dunham donated the parcel of land (former site of the Goodhue family home that had been acquired first by the Centre Congregational Church and then the Dunham Shoe Company). The funding package totaled around \$100,000, which was considered adequate for the project. One of the advantages of the state armory designation was

that most of the maintenance and fuel costs for the building would be paid for by the State of Vermont and not the Town of Brattleboro.

The individuals involved in this project were: Howard C. Rice Sr., publisher of the *Brattleboro Reformer*, George L. Dunham, owner of Dunham Brothers Shoe Co., Martin Austin, official of the Brattleboro Savings Bank, C.A. Pellett, local building contractor, and E.W. Gibson, lawyer and active in local and state politics.

Brattleboro's memorial armory and community house was dedicated in April 1923 and became the property of the State of Vermont.

Fifty-five years later the armory received a \$200,000 renovation to create a recreation and senior center for the Town as part of a Bicentennial project. The Vermont National Guard had relocated to Westminster and the town became the new owners of the facility. The armory was renamed the Gibson-Aiken Center and dedicated on December 3, 1978. Ernest W. Gibson Jr. and George Aiken were both former Vermont governors and United States senators. Gibson made his home in Brattleboro, and Aiken was a native of Putney.

## The Bushnell Block

Early urban centers attracted large numbers of people seeking employment. Many were recent immigrants, arriving without their families, with little money. This contributed to the demand and therefore created housing. People were forced to live in substandard accommodations located in the less desirable sections of a community because they could not afford better. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Brattleboro had a section along the Vernon Road called "The Patch" by the more economically secure townspeople because the inhabitants wore clothes that were mended with patches.

Such housing facilities did not always start out as substandard. They were often buildings constructed for a more upscale purpose. According to Paula Sagerman, the Historic Preservation Consultant who conducted the Historic Resource Documentation of the Bushnell Block for the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, the Lawrence Water Cure operated on this site starting in 1852. Water cures were popular at the time, and Brattleboro was also the home of the Wesselhoeft Water Cure, which was just across the street where the firehouse is now located. The water cures were popular among the country's affluent who traveled great distances to take advantage of the curative value of these facilities.

Sagerman states in her report that the Lawrence Water Cure went out of business in 1860. During the next 10 years Francis Parker, the new owner, subdivided the property and some of the water cure buildings were demolished. In 1879, a wood frame house 2½ stories high was constructed by Rebecca Bushnell, who had bought one of the vacant lots at the location. Rebecca's husband, Edward, was a local printer and foreman for *The Household*, a highly successful woman's magazine of its day. Edward later formed the publishing company Durfee & Bushnell. Rebecca and Edward lived at this address for 19 years. In 1887, the depth of the building was doubled and part of the building was made into a boarding house. This conversion undoubtedly was motivated in order to provide housing as Brattleboro's industries grew in the latter part of the 1800s.

After Rebecca's and Edward's deaths in 1914 and 1917, respectively, the building was left to their son, Jason E. Bushnell (1881-1960). Jason raised the building to three stories and the gabled roof was changed to a flat one. He opened the J.E. Bushnell Grocery Store. Sagerman mentions in her report that he also operated a grocery store on Flat Street, which also became a tenement and garage before burning down in 1941. During Jason's ownership the Bushnell Block took many twists and turns regarding use. The property was transferred to Jason's sons, J. Paul and Richard, who continued to operate it as a tenement building as have subsequent owners.

Sagerman concludes in her report that "its historic character has been greatly diminished due to alterations and deterioration. Therefore, it is not eligible as a contributing resource in a historic district."

The Bushnell Block was one of Brattleboro's players in providing housing to some of Brattleboro's residents. The building seemed to grow in a haphazard way to maximize the number of rental units and if the transportation center was sited in another location, it probably would have continued to function as it had in the past.

## Elevators:

### An Era of Ups and Downs in Brattleboro

In the mid- to late 1800s, taller buildings were required to house the growing industries. This created the problem of moving materials from the ground level to the upper floors. The ridge beam of the building was extended out from the building as a cantilever that had an

attached pulley and rope. Such a system allowed materials to be hoisted up to bay doors located on the exterior wall of each floor. There was also the problem of moving materials that were already on one floor to another without using the outside hoist in bad weather.

Around 1850 the human and animal muscle power of this operation was being replaced by a steam engine that was attached to a drum, called a windlass, on which a rope was wound. Counterbalances were also used to lessen the amount of power needed to lift the load. The whole operation was moved indoors by creating an opening, an early form of the elevator shaft, on each floor that allowed a platform to move freely between floors. Of course, if the rope broke, which it often did, the whole platform and its cargo and anyone riding on it would plunge down to the bottom.

Elisha Otis, born in Halifax, Vermont, in 1811, developed a safety device that prevented the elevator from falling if the rope broke. Otis demonstrated his invention in 1854 at the Crystal Palace Exposition in New York City. This invention is credited with enabling taller buildings to be built.

Another type of elevator developed during this period was the hydraulic hoist or water-powered elevator. It operated much like the hydraulic lift that the auto mechanic uses to raise the car so he can work on its underside. A long rod was attached to the bottom of a platform and connected to a plunger which in turn was placed in a tube. The tube ran from the bottom of the elevator shaft into the ground a distance equal to the height the elevator was to rise. The tube was sealed and made watertight around the rod/plunger. Water, under pressure, was forced in the tube, which caused the rod/plunger to raise the platform. To lower the platform, the water was released from the tube, which allowed the platform to descend. The valve that controlled the water flow was operated by ropes that ran up to the platform.

The disadvantage to this type of elevator was that the height it could travel was only two to three floors, owing to the need to drill a hole in the ground of equal depth.

Some of the buildings in downtown Brattleboro that used hydraulic elevators were the Hooker-Dunham and the American Buildings on Main Street, and the Dewitt Building on Flat Street. The Dewitt Building converted the elevator from water power to electric in 2000. The difficulty in getting parts for service was the reason for the conversion. The Hooker-Dunham building's elevator was removed in the 1980s to install a fireproof stairway, and all that remains is the hole in the basement floor once used for the rod/plunger that was attached to the elevator.

Marguerite Douglas remembers operating the elevator when she

worked in the Dunham Shoe Store in the 1940s.

"When I had to replenish stock, I would have to go on this rickety platform that had no sides and give a hard yank on one of two ropes that started or stopped the elevator. It was very slow and made all kinds of creaky noises," Douglas recalled. "I was, after some practice, able to get it to stop level with the floor."

The water pressure on lower Main Street has always been high because of the gravity-fed water system developed by George Crowell. This was one of the reasons that this type of elevator was used.

## If the Walls at Hilltop House Could Talk

"*Our Country Home—In Town*" proclaimed a 1945 real estate advertisement for building lots at "Bradley Terrace" placed by Brattleboro resident Fred Harris when he was subdividing the Bradley Farm property east of Putney Road. Such activity was common after World War II, as the nation's shortage of housing was felt by returning war veterans anxious to set up homes. Many old estates and farms were subdivided into smaller parcels for new home construction, often changing the character of the landscape in many communities. Levittown, Long Island, is probably the best known subdivision of farmland for the construction of homes during this period.

Harris had purchased the Bradley Farm from the Bradley estate in 1945 to create "upward of 200 large building lots" reported the *Reformer*. The parcel consisted of 62 acres of which the former Bradley home (now known as Hilltop House) was part. Richards Bradley (1834-1904) built a home for him and his wife, Sarah Merry, on the site in 1863.

The house is one of the remaining architectural treasures in Brattleboro. The oval dining room has curved oak doors that operate as well as they did in the 1800s. The 13-foot decorative plaster ceilings and moldings are still in place as is the sweeping main hall stairway and parquet floors. The exterior decorative woodwork as well as the porches have been removed. The wood siding, which was cut in sections and painted brown to simulate brownstone, a popular building material of the period, is now painted white. Strangely, brick was used between the exterior and interior walls to provide suitable support for the upper stories.

Much of the land was maintained as a working farm. A large barn to the southwest of the main house served as home for the dairy herd. Greenhouses, large gardens, and orchards were all part of the estate, providing food for the household.

Harris planned to raze the building after it was considered and rejected as a possible home for the American Legion in 1946. It was eventually sold to C. Warner and Edith Hopkins later that year who planned to subdivide the building and create apartments. It has been reported that before the sale was completed, Harris insisted that the house be painted white and that the porches be removed even though they were in good repair. There is probably some truth to this report, since Harris had removed the porches on his own house on North Street.

The Hopkinsons created two apartments on the first floor, and the second and third floors accommodated three apartments each. The work was completed by 1946. As one can imagine, these apartments were large and elegant in appearance since most of the decorative woodwork was maintained. Donald Hopkins, who lived in one of the apartments, described his family's apartment on the first floor as clearly larger than many present-day homes. The large room in the cellar under the current northwest parlor was the Hopkins' "ping pong/recreation room."

By the early 1960s Warner and Edith Hopkins found managing the Bradley Terrace Apartments, as it was called, too much for them. Warner was a trustee of the Vermont State Baptist Convention and thought that the former Bradley home, now an apartment building, would make an attractive residence for Vermont Baptists who also found managing their own homes too much for them. After considerable discussion the property was sold in 1964 to the Vermont Baptist Convention for \$40,000, a price considered below market at the time.

The former Bradley home was now Hilltop House. It was no longer surrounded by farmland, but by other homes, and it was, once again, about to have its interior changed by removing the apartments and making it suitable space for a retirement home. Residents would have their own rooms with some common areas such as the parlor and the wonderful oval dining room available for their use.

Additions, offering ten resident rooms, lobby, elevator, and community room, were constructed in the 1970s. They replaced the six-car garage, built by Hopkins for the tenants of Bradley Terrace Apartments, on the south side of the house.

The American Baptist Churches of Vermont/New Hampshire transferred ownership of Hilltop House to Hilltop House, Inc., in 2003.



## Many Called It Home

The arrival of the railroad in 1849 caused an unprecedented growth of Brattleboro's industry which, in turn, caused a similar growth in housing for the newly arrived workers. As factories grew, so did the immigrant population. Many of these workers arrived in the United States with limited resources. When they found employment, it was often the mill or factory that provided their housing.

Later, enterprising individuals saw the potential market for multi-family housing. In Brattleboro some single family homes, such as the Bushnell Block, were converted and added to to create this type of housing. Other buildings were specifically built as multi-family homes. Brattleboro has many such homes where each floor contained living space for one family, sometimes referred to as "double or triple deckers." Each family had its own outside entrance and a stairway leading to their home. Many of these buildings had an individual porch where each family could sit and catch some fresh air during the summer months. Later the apartment house made its appearance. The apartment building offered several housing units on each floor served by a common stair and hallway.

The historic William Stuart House at 13 Canal Street, built in 1896 and recently rehabilitated by the Brattleboro Area Community Land Trust (BACLT), is an example of an early apartment house. The building contains seven apartments all connected by a common hallway and stairs. Stuart (1861-1936) grew up in Brattleboro and became an artist specializing in stage scenery and who, according to BACLT's research, was motivated to build this particular building after learning that New York City had recently passed a ruling that all future apartment building construction must provide for each apartment to have its own bathroom facilities. Tenants of the old tenement buildings had to share a common toilet located at the end of each floor. Stewart had his building built with a bathroom in each apartment, and provided gas lighting throughout. Central heating was not commonplace in such buildings. Each apartment was heated by its own stove. Still, the completion of this building marked a new standard for multi-family housing in Brattleboro.

Sixteen years later in 1912, the Abbot apartment building on the corner of South Main and Canal Streets was completed. It was designed by architect Paul R. Henkel (1879-1936), who also designed the Austine School. He was the son of Charles Henkel, a woodcarver at the Estey Organ Company who encouraged his son to study at the Art Students League in New York City. Henkel's design was clearly seen as an upscale multi-fam-

ily dwelling. The October 11, 1912, *Vermont Phoenix* stated that the owner, Mr. Eels of Brattleboro, "takes great pride in the fact that not one piece of cheap construction has gone into the building." By 1912, electricity and central heating had made its appearance and Henkel and Eels took advantage of this technology by using it in the Abbott building.

Canal Street had several impressive buildings, inhabited or built by some prestigious personalities of their day. In addition to Stewart, Levi Fuller, former governor of Vermont, and his wife Abby, Jacob Estey, owner of Estey Organ Company, and his wife Desdemona, and Gordon Hardie (1854-1904), a prominent portrait artist, and his wife had Canal Street addresses. Hardie lent his skill to the design of the Canal Street School's clock face. The school building, completed in 1893, was designed by the architectural firm of McKim, Mead, and White. William Rutherford Mead was a Brattleboro native.

Much has happened on Canal Street since the turn of the last century. The Agape Church lost its bell tower, and the Canal Street School was at risk at losing its bell tower. The historic and unique cobblestone house, built by Judge Clarence Reed ca. 1860, was once used as a parsonage for the then Universalist Church. It was rehabilitated by BACLT to a "single-room occupancy" dwelling.

Over the years, many of the buildings had been allowed to fall into disrepair and were at risk of demolition. Organizations such as BACLT have come into existence to alter this process by funneling resources to rehabilitate these old buildings so that they can once again meet Brattleboro's housing needs and preserve some of Brattleboro's historic housing stock.

The Abbott apartment building has been rehabilitated by BACLT in partnership with Housing Vermont, the Town of Brattleboro, and the Holstein Association. Several other Canal Street buildings, including the William Stewart house, have also been rehabilitated to provide housing to Brattleboro's residents. Hardie's house became the home for the Brattleboro Area Hospice and the Canal Street School's bell and clock were saved.



## Brattleboro's Hotels

In the late 1800s, visitors to Brattleboro had several hotels providing upscale accommodations and dining to choose from.

The Revere House, located on the corner of Main and Elliot Streets, was opened in 1849 by James Fisk Sr., father of Jubilee Jim Fisk, a robber baron of the 1800s.

In January 1872 the body of Jubilee Jim Fisk was on view in the hotel prior to burial at Prospect Hill Cemetery. This fine hotel was destroyed by fire in 1877.

The Brattleboro House was located on the west side of Main Street halfway between Elliot and High Streets. Stagecoach service left from here to serve Townshend, Williamsville, Dover, and Hinesburg Village in Guilford. It was originally called Chase's Stage House in 1798, the Brattleboro Stage House in 1844, the Central House in 1853, and finally the Brattleboro House in 1855.

After the original Brattleboro House was destroyed by fire in 1869, a new hotel was built on what is now Plaza Park.

The American House, located at the foot of the east side of Main Street, became a hotel in 1811. Prior to its use as a hotel, it was used for mercantile business. In 1820 it was named the Sikes Hotel after its owner, Uriel Sikes. Between 1833 and 1837, the front gable and porch were added.

Famous guests: In 1840, Daniel Webster spent time at the American House before he gave his famous speech in Stratton.



## Brattleboro's Turn-of-the-Century Housing Needs Met

Before 1870, more than half of the United States' adult workers toiled on farms. Soon after, industrialization and urbanization developed at a rapid rate. People were no longer building their own homes and raising their own food, but relied instead on jobs in industry to provide the needed income to support themselves and their families. As Brattleboro's mills and industries developed, workers switched from farming to factory work. Many immigrants, encouraged by job opportunities, moved to the area. More and more people rented apartments near their work or lived in company housing. One of the social costs of this change was that many people had little income once they stopped

working, unless it came from savings or family members who were still working. Retirement and 401k plans, IRAs, and golden parachutes were many years away. Social Security would not become available until 1935.

Local communities may have had a history of meeting the needs of their citizens when family resources were not sufficient; however, after industrialization, many communities found this to be a growing and serious problem. Brattleboro was no exception. There was an increasing need to provide adequate housing and care for the elderly who no longer earned a wage, had savings, and because of advanced age, could not live on their own. Many of Brattleboro's seniors were widows or women who had never married, and until their old age, had their health and an adequate income by working to care for themselves.

On September 16, 1892, the *Vermont Phoenix* ran the following article: "Renewed interest is manifested for the establishing an old ladies' home in Brattleboro and in answer to a general request a meeting is to be held next Monday evening to consider the subject and if possible, to take some definite action." The meeting took place on September 19, 1892, at Lindenhurst, the home of Mr. and Mrs. George E. Crowell, now the Crowell Playground. C.F. Thompson was also present and suggested that the time had arrived for the creation of an institution for the care of the aged and disabled. Dr. H.D. Holton addressed issues of the type of care that could be provided. The Hon. Dorman B. Eaton raised issues of admission criteria, and suggested that "the charter be broad enough to cover all contingencies without being hampered by annoying details.

At the meeting's end, a committee was appointed to draft a charter. The home was to be called the Brattleboro Home for the Aged and Disabled. (The name was changed in 1972 to the Holton Memorial Home.)

The Brattleboro Home for the Aged and Disabled was incorporated on November 19, 1892. Gifts were received totaling \$8,000, which enabled the new board to authorize the purchase of the home of William Esterbrook, present site of the Holton Memorial Home, and have it renovated for its new use. Additional funds and furnishings were received from local families making it possible for the home to receive its first residents in 1897.

In 1903, because of increased demand and additional contributions, the present Holton Memorial Home was constructed. This was accomplished by moving the old Esterbrook house back on the lot to make room for the imposing new Colonial Revival structure, a style popular in Vermont in the early 1900s.

The new building, like several others in Brattleboro (Canal Street School, Union Station, former All Souls Unitarian Church and Parish House, the Granite Block [109-113 Main St.] and the Paramount Building),

was constructed of local stone. John C. Pellett of Worcester, Mass., formerly of Brattleboro, is credited with the design and construction of the building. It was reported that Pellett personally supervised the work. A.V. Cox, a local contractor, did the plumbing work and John Galvin installed the heating system. Indoor plumbing and central heating were not all that commonplace in 1903. It is probably why the installation of these two systems was reported in the paper at the time of the building's opening.

The Holton Memorial Home was expanded once again, only this time to the south. The original Esterbrook building was upgraded plus a new addition. This project provided the home with a new kitchen, dining facility, and program rooms. Such enhancing of Brattleboro's fine old buildings, rather than razing and building new, enables present and future generations to better appreciate the history of their community.

## Piece by Piece: Mail-Order Kit Homes Were One Response to Growing Housing Needs

**T**he concept of owning your own home changed in the late 1800s. It was no longer a house, barn and some acreage. It became only a house, often built on a standard-sized building lot which formed the residential communities surrounding urban centers. Many of these homes were built by individual carpenters and masons hired by the future homeowner, using architectural plans popular at the time. In some cases these homes were built by real estate developers who planned to sell them at a profit.

Home ownership was a goal of most Americans. It provided space to raise a family and represented a sound financial investment owing to the appreciation of the house's value over time. As urban centers grew so did the need for houses, but not everyone who wanted their own home could afford to have one built or purchase one that had already started to grow in value.

The market for affordable homes was tapped with the introduction of the precut or kit home. Americans had already developed a love affair with the mail-order catalog, so it was not too big a step to add houses to the long list of items that could be bought by mail order, shipped by rail and trucked to the building site. Three companies dominated the field of kit homes from about 1900 to 1940: Sears Roebuck, Montgomery Ward and Aladdin Home. These homes came in many styles, but

bungalows were the most popular.

Sears offered 450 variations to the basic house that could be enhanced with built-in breakfast nooks, cabinets, door hardware, paint, plumbing fixtures—everything including the kitchen sink. In the case of Sears and Montgomery Ward, all the furniture, china, and other household items could be purchased through the mail-order catalog as well. The houses were of high quality and offered guarantees. Aladdin would give the buyer "a dollar a knot" for each one found in the lumber delivered.

The whole house would arrive via the railroad in a boxcar and was then trucked to the building lot. Most Sears homes came in two boxcars and had approximately 30,000 parts. Each piece of lumber was numbered and corresponded to the instructions, which also included information regarding the installation of the plumbing, electrical, heating, plastering, and foundation specifications.

According to Brattleboro town records, many homes on Chestnut Street and Clark Avenue were built in 1920. This was the period that this type of home was popular in Brattleboro.

## St. Michael's Episcopal: One Hundred and Fifty Years and Counting

The year 2003 was the year for many communities in southeastern Vermont to celebrate their 250th anniversaries. It was also the year that Brattleboro's St. Michael's Episcopal Church celebrated its 150th.

Even though the United States was founded in part on the concept of separation of church and state, such separation blurred when communities were creating their local governments and religious communities. It was often the practice to conduct religious services in the town hall or have the local church serve as the repository of town records and a place to conduct the town's business. This practice was based on some very practical reasons. The building of a facility for the whole community's use was time consuming and a financial burden for a population that was laboring with the demands of New England farming. Providing separate facilities could easily outstrip the resources of the local population. And since the community was often of like minds, as far as religion was concerned, such a practice was an easy solution to a simple problem. In fact, in the late 1700s, residents of Brattleborough (this spelling

was later changed to Brattleboro) were expected to have their tax dollar support both the local church and their town government.

As populations grew and people from other parts of the world settled in the region to take advantage of the area's resources, the homogenous nature of the community started to change. One religious group was no longer the norm in these growing communities.

The single most important event that contributed to this change in the character of the population in the Brattleboro area was the arrival of the railroad in 1849. However, shortly before the railroad many new faces were being seen in Brattleboro as a result of the opening of the Brattleboro Hydropathic Institution directed by Dr. Robert Wesselhoeft in 1845. Such therapeutic facilities were popular in the last half of the 1800s and this particular one attracted notable personalities of the day. Julia Ward Howe, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow spent time in Brattleboro taking part of the water-cure at Wesselhoeft's establishment where the main station of the Brattleboro Fire Department is now located.

These newcomers (the term "flatlanders" had not yet been coined) brought money and a more cosmopolitan tone to the community. Brattleboro was developing closer to the shores of the Connecticut River where the railroad was located and along with this development there was a shift in where people wanted to live, work, and practice their religion.

The Episcopal Church was one of the early congregations in the area developing first in Guilford in 1818 and later moving to Brattleboro in the 1850s as economic forces influenced where people lived and worked. Christ Church in Guilford continues to stand as evidence of the Episcopal Church being part of the Guilford community.

Episcopal services were held with some regularity for about two years starting in 1836 in a building known as "Dickinson's Hall" located next door to Mocha Joe's coffee shop on Main Street. This did not continue and services became less regularly scheduled and were held in buildings rented for the occasion.

All this changed in 1853 when St. Michael's Episcopal Church was organized. The congregation was able to accomplish this largely because of the increase in the summer population associated with the water-cure and the general population growth of Brattleboro as a result of the railroad. There was suddenly a larger number of people willing to contribute to the creation of an Episcopal church in Brattleboro. As one might expect, the list of contributors had a high representation of wealthy and influential individuals of the time such as Judge Kellogg, who served on

the Vermont Supreme Court and was candidate for Governor of Vermont and a U.S. Senator. He contributed \$1,000. The list also included Colonel James Fisk Jr., the Wall Street financier. He gave \$5. Jim Fisk's father ran the Revere House on the corner of Elliot and Main Streets.

In 1852, a building lot became available because fire had destroyed the Vermont House, which previously occupied the spot. Key Bank is now at this location. The Town Hall, next door, was completed in 1855, where the Candle in the Night store is now. The newly formed congregation purchased the lot and ground was broken in 1857 to build St. Michael's Episcopal Church. Joseph Coleman Hart, who maintained offices in New York City, was the architect, and Joel Bullard of Alstead, New Hampshire, was the builder.

In 1953, the congregation of St. Michael's moved to the corner of Putney Road and Bradley Avenue, only this time they took the church building with them.



## Connecting Brattleboro by Rail

**O**n February 20, 1849, the first train stopped in Brattleboro. According to the *Semi-Weekly Eagle*, the train carried 1,500 passengers who were apparently all eager to celebrate this soon-to-be historic train ride. Such celebratory events often mark a transition in the way things are done and this was no exception.

The year 2003 marked the 250th anniversary of the signing of the charter that created the Town of Brattleboro. It might be of interest to think what this railroad connection meant to the town when it was about to celebrate its one hundredth anniversary.

Before Brattleboro was connected to other communities by a railroad, travel was limited to the use of riverboats or horse-drawn carriages, and communication was limited to newspapers, the U.S. Postal Service, or word of mouth. In 1850, Brattleboro's first telegraph message was sent to Boston. Telephones were not available until August 8, 1878, when a Bell

telephone was connected between the Town Hall and the Brooks Hotel, both Main Street locations.

Arch Street, the small street that looks like a driveway off Main Street between the Twilight Tea Lounge and the Gateway Travel agency, led to a wharf that served as the dock for the riverboats.

It was no simple task to make the round trip from Brattleboro to Hartford. The boat traveled downstream using the power of the river's current, but the return trip required considerable effort and ingenuity. Each boat was propelled by a crew of polemen totaling about 14. Each pole measured approximately 20 feet and was tipped with a foot long pike. The crew was evenly divided on each side of the boat. The poleman would plant the pike end of the pole on the river's bottom and place the other end of the pole to his shoulder. He would then walk along the deck of the boat until most of the pole's length was below water level before extracting the pole and return to the boat's stern for another go at it. His fellow crew members would be right behind him doing the same. When the boat reached areas of the river where the current was too swift for the poleman to make any headway, lines were secured to a team of oxen or to trees where a windlass was used to help the boat overcome the river's current.

The boats could travel only during daylight and when the river was free of ice. The boats had a limited capacity of around eight tons, and a round trip from Bellows Falls to Hartford took between 10 and 12 days. Later, the boats were powered by steam engines and canals were built where the current was swift, which made the riverboats easier to use and allowed their capacity to be increased.

The arrival of the railroad changed all this. Freight could be moved to and from Brattleboro 24 hours a day and throughout the winter months. The trip to Hartford would take hours, not days, and destinations were not limited to towns bordering on the river. Passenger travel was made easier and mail service improved. Mail could be sorted en route and ready for distribution once it reached its destination. The railroad connected people and their ideas by connecting communities. Mail-order catalogues became a staple of the home because goods could be easily shipped. It is during this time, in the latter part of the 1800s, that Brattleboro came into its own. Many Brattleboro businesses started and flourished during this period—the Estey Organ Company, the printing and publishing industries, as well as Brattleboro's cultural offerings.

Railroads took a downturn in the years following W.W.II owing to airplanes, the building of the interstate highway system during the Eisenhower administration, the use of the automobile, trucks, and buses that

offered what the railroad once did. By 1971, the Town of Brattleboro was making plans to raze the Union Station to create a parking lot; however, a group of concerned citizens organized and turned the old Union Station into a museum.

Passenger service and several freight trains continue to travel the route daily.



## Getting Around Brattleboro

America's move from an agrarian society to an urban one, as a result of the Industrial Revolution, had a major impact on how one traveled. In the late 1800s, people were moving in great numbers to urban centers, where they lived in apartment or tenement buildings and worked in one of the town's mills or factories. This was a significant life style change from living and working on a farm. No longer did people hitch up their horses to make the necessary trips to town and neighboring farms. Few urban dwellers, many of whom were newly arrived immigrants, even owned a horse, although one could be rented at a livery stable.

Many factories built "company housing" and "company stores" near the factory so workers could walk from home to work, and shop. But, as the Industrial Revolution took hold, urban centers expanded to accommodate additional businesses. Main Streets grew and their shops offered much more than the company store did, not to mention the attractions of the bars, theaters and eventually movie houses. Railroads, a form of mass transportation, brought visitors to a community that needed its own mass transportation system to enable its citizens and visitors to travel about.

The omnibus made its appearance in America in 1827 and operated on Broadway in New York City. It was nothing more than a horse-drawn carriage that could carry several passengers. What put it in the special category of mass transportation was the fact that the omnibus traveled a regular route, made scheduled stops at predetermined locations, charged an affordable fare, and anyone could ride. If people wanted to use the omnibus, they stood at the regular stop and flagged the driver down as he approached. Once inside the stagecoach-like omnibus with its driver sitting on top of the passenger compartment, the passenger would signal the driver when they wanted to get off at a particular stop by pulling a leather strap attached to the driver's leg. It has been suggested that this is the origin of the expression "pulling your leg."

The introduction of steel rails made the ride smoother and the car could be larger because there was less friction between the steel rail and wheel. These larger streetcars, still powered by the horse, could hold more passengers and had a crew of two—the driver and the conductor. The "omnibus" now became the "streetcar."

The steam engine, and later electricity, eliminated the need to use horses. The cable car was one such attempt. A long continuous cable, run by a steam engine, traveled in a channel between and below the rails on a system of pulleys. The cable car was equipped with a clutch-like device, operated by the driver, that gripped the cable and enabled the streetcar to be powered by the moving cable, much the way a rope tow works at a ski slope. The cable car has become an icon for the city of San Francisco.

After electricity as a power source made its debut in the 1880s, streetcars were equipped to use this new form of power. Wires were strung high over the streetcar's tracks and each streetcar had a boom that touched the electrically charged wires. This enabled the electric motor on each streetcar to operate. The electricity was generated at a central power house somewhere along the route. "Trolley" was now another name used for this form of mass transportation.

Many New England towns were using this type of mass transportation. Brattleboro offered its citizens their first trolley ride on July 31, 1895. As with many proposed changes in a community, they are often met with opposition. In the case of Brattleboro's trolley, it was Rudyard Kipling who seemed to be the most outspoken, writing a letter to the attorney representing the trolley project stating in part: "Should the trolley line be made through the steep, narrow and tortuous streets of the town I should find myself entirely cut off from my present railway station and base of supplies; for no man who has had experience of trolleys and their workings would willingly risk the lives of his family or his horses by exposing them to the daily chances of accident from direct collision with the cars, from fallen wires or from runaways." But, since Mr. Kipling did not commute to work in Brattleboro's mills and factories, his opposition was not terribly representative of the community's thinking at the time.

Edward C. Crosby, a successful businessman in Brattleboro, and Marcus A. Coolidge of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, were the main promoters of the Brattleboro trolley system. The system carried 2,400 passengers a day during its first year of operation and carried passengers along Main Street, Western Avenue to West Brattleboro, and out to the Valley Fair grounds (now the site of the Brattleboro Union High School). The system operated until August 29, 1923, when it was replaced with

gasoline-powered buses, considered to be an improvement because, not being dependent on tracks, routes could be changed easily. By this time, the automobile was becoming commonplace and many roads were paved. Since the buses were equipped with pneumatic rubber tires, the issue of a smoother ride was no longer a consideration. Another advantage of the bus was that it was not powered by overhead wires.

Buses, supplemented by taxicabs, have enabled people to get around Brattleboro since the 1920s and there were no plans for a subway system, but clearly the automobile had taken over. This public transportation evolution led to Brattleboro's Bee Line town bus.



## Brattleboro's Horsepower

**B**efore the horseless carriage, which is now powered by an engine delivering 100+ horsepower, there was the horse-drawn carriage, whose horsepower was one four-legged animal, the horse. Sometimes there were teams of horses hitched to the carriage or wagon, but most horse-drawn vehicles were powered by one horse that had a name. Nothing flashy like "Firebird Super Eight," but unpretentious like Dobbin, Buttercup or Sonny. The horse also had a life span of about 30 years, considerably longer than today's automobiles, but then they did not have "built-in obsolescence" bred into them.

Brattleboro's commerce was quite dependent on the horse-drawn carriage. Wagons that carried heavy cargo were pulled by draft horses that were bigger and more muscular than the carriage horse. Before 1849, when the railroad arrived in Brattleboro, horse-drawn wagons carried materials from the mill or farm to town. Goods slated for larger markets traveled down Arch Street to a pier on the Connecticut River to be loaded onto boats. After the railroad's arrival, horse-drawn wagons made regular trips to the freight yards around the railroad station and station wagons carried travelers' baggage to local hotels.

People traveled to visit neighbors and to pick up supplies in town via carriages and wagons. And as one might expect, the more money you had, the fancier your carriage. Carriages and wagons could be purchased from mail-order companies such as Sears and Roebuck and Montgomery Ward. As one travels around Brattleboro today, carriage houses and horse barns can still be seen behind residences, some quite elaborate buildings with attractive cupolas and space for many carriages. Livery stables were scattered around Brattleboro offering appropriate services. The buildings of Henry B. Allen's stable can still be seen at

25 Oak Street. There were horse troughs. Wells Fountain, designed by William Rutherford Mead and completed in 1890, was originally intended for the watering of horses as well as being ornamental.

There are many contemporary terms, associated with the automobile, that have their origin from the horse-drawn carriage period such as horsepower, the dashboard, which was the part of the carriage that deflected the mud that was thrown up from the horses, the jump seat, and the car styles—coupe, sedan, phaeton, station wagon, runabout, brougham, and landau. The coachman became the chauffeur.

Valley Fair, which was held in the fall where the Brattleboro Union High School is now located, gave wagon and carriage owners a reason to decorate their vehicles for the ride to the fair. This tradition was continued when the automobile started to appear in Brattleboro. Both the horse-drawn carriage and the automobile coexisted in Brattleboro as they did in other communities until the 1920s when the automobile took over. Gas stations and garages replaced livery stables, and the carriage house and horse barn housed the family's automobile.

## Carl Magee and Lovely Rita

**S**upply and demand dictates much in our society. Limited supply and great demand creates a market for those who control the supply. Pleasure automobiles were in great demand after W.W.II and the supply was limited because automobile manufacturers had stopped production during the war years. There were no special deals or discounts in this market. People paid top dollar for their new automobiles.

This same principle applies to parking. When urban centers started to grow in the latter half of the 1800s, more horse-drawn carriages and horses appeared in the main part of towns. Hitching posts and rails were used to tether the horse. When the spaces in front of the buildings became filled, the livery stable was available for parking; however, a fee was charged, especially if the visitor's horse needed lunch. Horse watering troughs were available along the street free of charge.

By the time the automobile made its appearance in the early 1900s, downtown traffic started to become a municipal concern. It became increasingly difficult to keep traffic moving along the street and at the same time provide an adequate number of places to park. In Brattleboro, livery stables and the newly built parking garages provided extra parking for the horse and automobile. This was an early attempt to deal with this problem.

On Flat Street a parking garage was opened where the Latchis Hotel complex is now located. It was across the street from a livery stable, now the site of Sam's. On High Street just above the Brooks Hotel, the Manley Brothers built a garage that still stands today, although it no longer functions as a garage. Fees were charged to use these facilities. Starting in the late 1940s and '50s, the need for parking took hold. Many of Brattleboro's buildings were razed to accommodate the automobile. The Harmony Parking Lot, the post office's lot, the High Grove Lot, the parking lot near to the Whetstone Bridge on Main Street, the parking lots on Harris Place were once the sites of functioning buildings that were razed to create parking for the automobile. A new parking facility made its appearance between Flat and Elliot Streets to meet Brattleboro's current parking needs.

On May 24, 1938, a new gadget was invented by Carl C. Magee of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, called a "coin controlled parking meter." This device was first installed in Brattleboro on June 2, 1947. By limiting the time one could park their vehicle, municipalities were able to make parking available to a greater number of people, often shoppers, and at the same time, generate revenue for the community. Parking was in limited supply and the demand was increasing. Therefore, those who controlled the parking spaces had the opportunity to make some money. Prior to the parking meter, municipalities were limited to signs, indicating the amount of time one could park. The signs were posted along the street. To ensure compliance, the police officer would place a chalk mark in the same location of the front and back tires of a parked vehicle. After the posted time had elapsed, the officer would retrace his route. If the chalk marks were in the same spot of both the front and back tires, he would write a summons (a parking ticket) for parking more than the allotted time. This system worked because the front and back wheels of a vehicle do not rotate the same number of times, therefore if the car had been moved, the chalk marks would be in a different location on each tire. The parking meter eliminated much of this process and at the same time generated revenue; however, chalking continued in some areas to discourage people from leaving their car in the same spot after the meter had expired.

Magee's invention created a new job category—the meter maid. In 1967, two of the Beatles, John Lennon and Paul McCartney, even wrote a song, "Lovely Rita," which honored these civil servants and gave their job international recognition. In Brattleboro, parking enforcement officers were employed to provide this function.

When the Brattleboro Transportation Center was first proposed,

many individuals wrote letters to the editor of the *Brattleboro Reformer* stating that they had conducted their own surveys, some over several days, that indicated Brattleboro had plenty of parking spaces and did not need the proposed transportation center or, conversely, that there was a great need for additional parking. For a few anxious months in the late 1990s, it looked like a new parking-related job title was in the making, that of parking space counter and perhaps a new song written.

## Snow in All the Wrong Places

In New England when people lived mostly on farms, snow removal was limited to clearing a path from the house to the barn, if the two buildings were not connected by a series of sheds, which they often were. Most of the occupants' needs were met within the confines of their house and barn. Food, firewood and silage had been stored, so there was little need to travel over snow-covered roads. When travel was necessary, horse-drawn sleighs and heavier wagons, equipped with runners and drawn by a team of oxen, were used to get about. To combat heavy snow drifts a snow roller was used to pack down the snow, making it easier to travel by sleigh. Lester Powers, who worked for the Brattleboro Public Works Department for 50 years, remembers his dad using a snow roller on Stratton Hill in the late 1920s and early 1930s. "He would hitch up his team of oxen and guide the roller along the road a few miles to the next farm, where the job would be taken over by his neighbor and a fresh team," Powers said. A double snow roller was used on Main Street Brattleboro, which enabled people to travel to town to conduct business.

After the railroad and streetcars came to Brattleboro, snow plows and teams of men were hired to clear the tracks. No thought was given to actually removing the snow from the roads until after the arrival of the automobile.

When roads were paved and people became more dependent on the automobile, the thought of not being able to use it in the snow was simply unacceptable to most citizens. Telegraph and then telephone and electric lines that were felled by a snowstorm had to be repaired. As communication and transportation became an essential part of everyday life, keeping the roads open became a major civic priority.

Rather than packing the snow down for a better sleigh ride, it was pushed to the side by a snow plow, pulled by a team of oxen or horses, making it easier for the wheels of the automobile to travel on the snow-

covered road. However, in areas of heavy automobile use, this process caused the snow to turn to ice, making for a slick road surface that was often hazardous for the automobile. To deal with this new problem, sand was trucked in and spread on the roadway and chains were attached to automobile tires (tire chains) to provide greater traction. Now snow tires and all-weather tires serve this purpose. Enterprising motorists started to place bags of sand in the back of their rear-wheel-drive truck or car to put more weight over the drive wheels of the vehicle, creating better traction. If this failed and they got stuck, they had a supply of sand to throw on the slick surface. This technique is still practiced today.

As the automobile took over as a means of transportation and sleighs were reserved for "old-fashioned sleigh rides," the idea of clearing the road surface altogether took hold. To accomplish this, better plows were designed. First, simple V-plows were used and then winged plows that had the ability to move the snow to the side of the road. With the aid of the wing, which was originally controlled by a man using a block and tackle (now automated), a shelf was formed in the piled snow, making room for more snow to be removed from the road without narrowing the lanes. When the snow blower made its appearance, it enabled the snow to be blown from the ground right into a truck and carted away.

What the snow plow and blower could not do was done with a mixture of imported salt and sand from a local sand bank. Salt is spread on the plowed surface because it lowers the freezing point of water which causes the ice to turn to slush, which is not as slick. Powers recalls that the salt would arrive via boxcar at Brattleboro's Union Station and his job, in addition to running a plow, was to shovel it into a wheelbarrow, push it up a wooden ramp, and dump it in a truck. Later a motorized augur was used to accomplish the task.

Keeping a community's roadways clear for automobile traffic is an activity that receives strong support. It has become part of the winter experience. In fact, the Volkswagen Company once ran an ad showing the VW Beetle traveling through unplowed snow higher than the Beetle itself. When it reached its destination, the town's garage and snow plow, a voice-over said, "Did you ever wonder how the guy who drives the snow plow got to the snow plow?"



## Gaslight Era Lit Up Downtown Brattleboro

**B**rattleboro's gaslight era is all but forgotten except for the gas-works building across from Brattleboro's Union Station on the Connecticut River. In 2006 it offers few clues to its important role in Brattleboro's history.

In the late 1880s when the Industrial Revolution was in full swing, gas was used to fuel interior and exterior lighting fixtures. It was considered a superior kind of lighting over candles and oil lamps because it was piped into buildings providing an uninterrupted source of fuel. Streets were illuminated at night, which eliminated the need to carry a lantern. This new source of fuel could also be used to operate stoves for cooking and heating.

The Brattleboro Gaslight Company ran a gas manufacturing, storage, and distribution operation by the railroad station during this period and into the 1900s, enabling Brattleboro to enjoy the gaslight era much as Boston and other New England cities did.

One of the problems associated with this new source of fuel was how to store it. Because gas was used mostly in the evening hours and less at other times, gas had to be stored in order to accommodate this uneven demand.

Storage facilities called gasholder tanks were used to store the gas. The gas was manufactured in the gasworks building by heating coal in ovens, capturing the gas that was produced, and moving it through pipes to the gasholder tanks. Additional pipes (street mains) ran below street level to the street lamps, homes, and commercial buildings. The use of gas was measured for billing purposes by gas meters installed at each location.

The gasholder tank was like a huge iron pot placed upside down in a large pool of water. The water formed a seal so that when the gas entered the tank via the pipes from the gashouse, it would remain in the tank. The tank moved up and down with the aid of counterweights, pulleys, and tracks. The stored gas was forced out of the tank, through the mains, and into the buildings, where it was burned in gaslights. Gasholder tanks were encased in a round brick building with a conical shaped roof capped with a cupola. The building was several stories high, had few windows, and generally only one door. The cupola allowed for the exhaust of any escaping gas and the brick shell served to protect the pulleys and tracks from the weather.

This was a dangerous operation and a major insult to the environment. On August 16, 1901, Charles Bean, who worked at the gasworks,

died of burns he suffered as a result of a flash fire that threatened the whole gasworks. The smell of gas permeated the area, but interest in industrial safety and protecting the environment was not on the public agenda at the time.

The advantages offered by gaslights were significant and therefore created a demand. In 1887, the Baptist Church on Main Street had its front stained-glass window illuminated by gaslight, requiring many gas burners to be installed. Gas lights lined Brattleboro's roads, and homes and shops enjoyed much more efficient lighting.

Electricity replaced gas to illuminate the homes and streets of Brattleboro, and eventually a restaurant was built on the foundation of one of the two Brattleboro Gaslight Company's gasholder tanks.

## When the Iceman Was a Regular Visitor

There is a large part of the population that can remember the icebox and its drip pan. If you are younger and your home always had an electric refrigerator, sometimes called "the fridge" after the Frigidaire brand, you may have had some experience with the icebox at a summer cottage or camp. Electric refrigerators didn't appear in American households in any great number until the 1930s.

The icebox and the need for ice to make it work not only supported an industry, but became part of the family's domestic routine. Most home iceboxes were placed near the kitchen door so the iceman could deliver the ice without having to carry the dripping block too far into the house. As more and more homeowners bought refrigerators, the icebox was relegated to the back shed or barn; however, many reemerged as a sought after antique to be placed in people's living rooms and used as bars.

Customers placed signs, provided by the iceman, in their windows to let him know how many pounds of ice they needed or if he should skip the delivery altogether. The horse knew the route and would stop at each customer's house so the iceman could read the sign and make his delivery. Wearing a rubber apron, the iceman would take an ice pick and break off the right size piece, and then using very large ice tongs, place the cut ice block on the scale attached to the back of the wagon. He'd sling the ice on his shoulder, which he had covered with a large piece of canvas or leather, carry the ice to the customer's icebox, lift its top hatch-like door, and drop the ice in. If customers prepaid for their ice, often at a discount, he would punch the customer's card indicating how

much ice was delivered.

The drip pan, located at the bottom of the icebox, caught the water from the melting ice. It had to be emptied with some regularity or it would overflow onto the floor. Many people dealt with this problem by drilling a hole in the floor and connecting a pipe that would allow for the water to drip directly onto the cellar's dirt floor.

Summertime brought kids and the iceman together. Youngsters would run behind the ice wagon in hopes of getting some pieces of ice that flew off the ice block as he cut it to size. Many a good-natured iceman would let the kids pick a piece of ice that they could suck on for a while on a hot summer's day.

The ice that supplied the icebox came from local bodies of fresh water. In Brattleboro, most of the ice came from Crystal Springs Ice Company on Frost Place, owned first by Olly Whitney but later by the Brattleboro Ice Company. There were many springs in the area providing a water source for the ice ponds. Ice was harvested by first scraping the snow off the ice using a team of horses and a plow. The water's surface would be scored about 5 inches deep in a checkerboard pattern by horse drawn plows. A hole would be cut in the score line to place the tip of the hand powered ice saw. Men would cut along the score line trying to break the ice block; otherwise, they used chisel bars to break the blocks lose. The ice blocks would float. Men, using pike poles, would guide them as they were dragged by horses along a water channel to the icehouse on the shore of the pond. When the block reached the end of the channel, it would be hoisted from the pond and placed in the insulated icehouse. Saw dust or salted hay was put between the blocks to prevent them from freezing to each other and making it easier for the iceman to get the ice for his day's deliveries.

Home refrigerators with ice dispensers built into the door have eliminated the need for the iceman. Almost every motel and hotel have ice machines on every floor, and kids no longer run after the ice wagon on a hot summer's day.



## Number, Please: Phones Start Ringing in Town

**M**any can still remember Lily Tomlin playing Ernestine, the sassy telephone operator on the 1970s television show *Laugh-In*, asking, "Is this the party to whom I am speaking?"

At that time most of the country's adult population had some first-hand experience with telephone service before rotary dial, touch tone, answering machines, voice mail, and cell phones.

Local phone calls were placed by picking up the phone and for the operator to say, "Number please." The caller then gave her (there were very few male operators) the number—for example, 423 R 2 (423 ring 2 times)—and she would place the call by connecting the circuit and ringing the party's phone two times.

Since many of the phone lines were party lines, that is, several on one phone line, all their phones would ring at the same time. Customers knew which calls were for them by the number of times the phone rang. (It was also obvious when a neighbor was getting a call and one could listen in on the conversation, but, of course, customers were not supposed to do that.)

Telephones arrived in Brattleboro on August 8, 1878, when a Bell telephone was connected between the Town Hall (where A Candle in the Night and Key Bank are now located on Main Street) and the Brooks Hotel. This two-party system was part of an exhibit at the Unitarian Fair being held in Brattleboro.

Brattleboro residents F.W. Childs, his nephew Walter H. Childs, E.G. Frost, and H.R. Lawrence were agents for the American Bell Co. and were anxious to develop a telephone system in Brattleboro. This Brattleboro telephone exchange operated in offices in the Crosby Block.

In 1880 a line was strung from Brattleboro to Wilmington—a distance of 20 miles. Similar expansion occurred elsewhere in the area and eventually the Brattleboro telephone exchange was sold to the New England Telephone Co. and the operation moved from the Crosby Block down Main Street to the Barber Building.

A cornerstone was laid at the phone company's own building on the corner of Main Street and Harris Place in October 1953. A headline in the *Brattleboro Reformer* at the time proclaimed, "New telephone setup here will be the most modern yet." This move accompanied Brattleboro's conversion to the dial system. The telephone, like many other technological advances, has now become such an integral part of our everyday lives that we hardly realize it.

Even popular entertainment began to reflect the invention of the telephone. In 1925 Irving Berlin wrote the song "All Alone" with the memorable lyric, "All alone by the telephone, waiting for a ring, a ting-a-ling." And Glenn Miller and his orchestra entertained audiences with "Pennsylvania 6-5000." Ladies-of-the-evening became "call girls" after the telephone enabled their clients to arrange their meeting by using the telephone. Movies had titles like "Dial M for Murder" and all those Hollywood starlets talked on white telephones in their luxurious city apartments.

In communities such as Brattleboro and in other rural areas, the telephone became a link with the rest of the world and the operator was called upon to do more than just connect two callers. The operator was the community's 911 service—before there was 911 service—and would offer comfort and assurance to a caller in distress while she summoned help. In smaller exchanges, she often provided a news service for her neighbors.

"I really felt we lost something when company policy changed and we stopped telling a customer that we would call them back in five minutes when we had placed their call. We were instructed to tell the customer, 'The line is busy. Try again later,'" said Marion Watson, operator and later supervisor at the Brattleboro exchange from 1952 to 1986.

## Brattleboro Turns on the Juice

In 1965 a major blackout threw most of the northeastern United States, and parts of Canada, into darkness. A century earlier the concept of a blackout was unknown.

Thomas Edison had much to do with the world's dependency on electric light and power. His incandescent light bulb was patented on January 27, 1880, along with an electric generating and distribution system developed later and first operated in New York City.

Although generating electrical power to run arc lights and motors had been developed, the idea of a central generating station with a system of electrical wires to distribute the power was new. Arc lights were dangerous because the carbon rods used in them were the equivalent of an open flame.

Edison's incandescent bulb held a filament made of a material that did not conduct electricity very well. When electricity passed through it, the filament heated to a white-hot glow. Since it was enclosed in a partial vacuum inside the glass bulb, free of oxygen, it would not burst

into flames. This was a considerable safety advantage offer the arc light and of great interest to mill and factory owners.

In Brattleboro, the development of electric lighting with a central generating plant mirrored many other cities. It was, however, among the communities in New England leading the effort to have electricity as a source of power. Brattleboro already had gaslight for street, home and commercial lighting.

The Brattleboro Gas Light Company began manufacturing and selling gas for illumination in 1869. It operated the gasworks and a distribution system of gas mains. In 1894, it also operated one of the first electric generating facilities in Brattleboro. It was located at the Fletcher Mill where Elliot and Williams streets intersect.

Prior to this central plant, businesses were starting to use their own generating systems to provide the needed power for electric light. In December 1886, machinist D.E. Barrett had electric incandescent lights in his shop in West Brattleboro, according to local newspaper accounts.

On April 9, 1887, a letter sent by the electric company to the town of Brattleboro offering to maintain "four street lights of 2000 candle-power each until 11:30 p.m. 25 nights per month at an expense of a \$100 per light per year" was read at the village meeting.

Some leaders of the town were not interested. L.K. Fuller, then lieutenant governor and afterward governor, was opposed, as were Edward Crosby and Charles F. Thompson; however, when the question was called at the meeting, it was decided to accept the electric company's proposal, and electric street lighting became part of Brattleboro.

In August 1891, according to an article in *The Phoenix*, "One of the largest gatherings ever assembled on West Brattleboro Village common, met to celebrate the installation of the electric lights. Col. George W. Hooker and Charles F. Thompson gave 'spirited addresses' and the band 'surpassed' itself."

During this period, electric lighting was being installed in stores such as G.A. Briggs and Co., Starker and Wellman, and Edwards and Lillis. The Grange store and Hildreth's billiard room were scheduled for the installation of electric lights. Mr. Barrett, the machinist, was now involved with the installation of electric lights in other areas of Brattleboro.

The use of electricity created a whole new industry—the electrical contractor. The 1907 Brattleboro Directory carries the first listing for such a service: "H.P. Walker, 10 Elliot Street. EVERY-THING ELECTRICAL," the advertisement read.

The Brattleboro Street Railroad Company began operating an electric trolley line in 1895. Power for the trolley was provided by the Brattleboro

Gas Light Company, which was now in both the gas manufacturing and electric generating businesses. In 1896, the Arch Street station was constructed to meet the ever-increasing demand for electricity. This facility was shut down in the early 1940s and eventually became residential and studio space.

The Brattleboro Gas Light Company built a dam and power station in West Dummerston on the West River in 1903. This facility operated until the late 1960s; however, the construction of the Vernon Dam in 1909 signaled that electrical power was here to stay. This major undertaking provided the needed electrical power for the mill and manufacturing industries of the area. It was followed by the construction of the Yankee Nuclear Power plant in Vernon, which became operational on November 30, 1972.

The Brattleboro Gas Light Company was acquired by Twin State Gas and Electric Company in 1906, which became part of Central Vermont Public Service in 1943.

Electrical power has become such an integral part of our day-to-day activity that we hardly notice the role it plays in enhancing the quality of our lives. Only the rare experience of a power outage, like the one in 1965, causes us to take note of how dependent we have become on electricity.

In fact, communities now have major backup emergency generating systems to ensure that the flow of electricity is never interrupted especially for communication and critical services.

## Making Time Count

ur sense of time has always been based on the position of the sun. With the creation of the sundial, time's elusiveness was reduced and we were offered a way to measure its passage in a somewhat standardized form. Public squares had large sundials, often on the side of a prominent building, so the citizens could tell the time.

When mechanical clocks replaced sundials, the tower clock became a familiar part of communities. They served as the town's regulator of activity and had the added advantage of being able to strike a bell as each hour or part-hour passed. As industry developed and railroads arrived, the factory whistle and standardized time became part of the horology scene.

Brattleboro was not left out of this experience. Mills and factories had whistles to signal the start or end of shifts, and the many churches,

the Canal Street elementary school, and the Brattleboro Retreat psychiatric hospital maintained public clocks. Business owners had clocks suspended from their storefronts or placed on the sidewalk to provide Brattleboro residents with easy access to the time of day. In addition, the community was told of the passing hours by the striking of the bells in the many clock towers.

While the Estey factory's whistle is no longer heard and wind-up pocket watches and wrist watches have been replaced with battery-powered digital ones, Brattleboro still has many public clocks that continue to do their job as a result of individuals who think it is worth their effort to keep these clocks ticking.

Former Brattleboro Police Sgt. and horologist Albert Hall kept the Main Street and Centre Congregational Church clocks working from 1947 until his retirement in 2001, when Geoff Nichols and Sylvester Murphy took over the job.

The *Brattleboro Reformer* reported on December 14, 1972, the Main Street clock was toppled by a heavy wind. It crashed to the ground, hitting a parking meter and damaged a parked car. The clock was severely damaged, but thanks to the efforts of Hall, the cracked case, damaged dial, and glass were restored.

A few years earlier, merchant Ralph Michelman led a private fund-raising drive to enable the town to purchase the clock when he learned that the clock was to be sold. "It's an old friend, you know," Michelman was quoted as saying at the time.

Murphy and Nichols are looking into ways that the Estey clock can be brought back to life. This Seth Thomas clock, installed at the Estey Organ Company in 1897, got its first repair in 1914. In 1976 Hyacinth Renaud had it repaired for the Bicentennial celebration. It had stopped running around 1963.

Beatrice Massey Baker and her friend Dorothy Edwards Robbins kicked off a fund-raising effort by the Brattleboro Historical Society in 2001 to replace some of the decorative parts of the Canal Street School bell tower. Baker and Robbins were alumni of the school and shared fond memories of their time there as pupils. "The fact that the clock had a striking bell kept the community on time even through the night," Robbins said with a smile.

"The bell would be rung as a warning of the start of the school day and you knew you had to get a move on so you would be at school when the clock struck the hour," Baker added with a laugh during an interview with these ladies for this essay.

## Clearing Brattleboro's Clogged Arteries

 **W**hat do cardiovascular surgeons have in common with the utilities crew of the Brattleboro Public Works Department? They both work at bypassing blocked arteries.

While early attempts to bypass blocked coronary arteries date back to 1951 when surgeons Vineberg and Miller did an implantation of the internal mammary artery into the myocardium of a patient suffering from stenotic arteriosclerotic coronary artery disease, public works departments have been doing a similar procedure on water mains ever since pipes were used to move water from one place to another.

The Brattleboro Public Works staff often readies themselves with their own surgical gear when they open up Main Street to locate the more than century-old water main. It was made of cast iron, an improvement over wooden mains; however, as a result of the aging process and an early diet of non-filtered water with a high iron content (a water main's equivalent to high cholesterol) deposits built up on the interior walls causing "municipal utility artery disease." The goal was to bypass the sections that had become occluded and in danger of bursting. A burst water main in the winter months is a major problem, not only because of freezing temperatures, but the emergency work competes with other high priorities of the public works department, such as snow removal.

It was not until 1880, when George Crowell, publisher of the highly successful women's weekly paper *The Household*, developed a private water system, that Brattleboro started to have an integrated and unified water distribution system. Interest in the importance of such a system was undoubtedly aroused after several devastating fires destroyed a large part of downtown Brattleboro in 1869 and again in 1877. The Estey Organ Company and the S.A. Smith Toy Company had also suffered major fires. Extinguishing these fires was hindered by lack of an adequate pressurized water supply.

Prior to this effort the water mains were made of wood. The sections of wooden pipe were made of a tree trunk that had had a hole drilled through its length. One end was tapered to fit into the non-tapered end. Metal bands were placed around the connection and sealed with pitch. Additional metal bands were placed around the pipe to prevent splitting.

On November 7, 1888, two fire hydrants were installed by George J. Brooks, owner of the Brooks Hotel, and connected to the new Chestnut Hill Reservoir. By 2003, there were six located along Main Street. Fire hy-

drants became more common as municipalities developed better water distribution systems.

The modern fire hydrant is the outgrowth of the fireplug and continues to be called by that name in some areas. When wooden pipes were in use, firefighters would drill a hole in the pipe to secure a source of water for the bucket brigade. When the fire was extinguished the hole would be plugged. A record of these plugged holes was kept by the firemen in case they were needed again. In 1666 a fire caused great damage to London. The value of the fireplug had been demonstrated and London had all future water mains installed with pre-drilled holes whose plugs extended to street level.

The hydrant is a mechanized fireplug, equipped with standardized threaded couplings to which a fire hose can be attached. The flow of water through the hydrant can be activated at street level. The cleverness of the fire hydrant is that it allows the water to drain back down below the frost line where it will not freeze when it is not in use. The water pressure in these systems is created by having the source of water at a higher elevation than the hydrant.

Not only is a water supply something citizens expect for domestic and commercial activities, it is essential for firefighting. In 2003 there were over 20 buildings on Brattleboro's Main Street that had automated sprinkler systems fed by the water main. This means that when a fire occurred, the sprinkler head nearest the fire is activated by the fire's heat, and springs open. An uninterrupted spray of water covers the fire. At the same time, a fire alarm is activated, which enables the Brattleboro Fire Department to respond to the fire. These systems are highly effective and the reason for substantial reduction in human and property loss, along with a commensurate reduction in the cost of fire insurance premiums.

In the 1950s, the Consolidated Edison Company, New York City's electrical power and gas utility, had the slogan "Dig we must for a better New York." This was their attempt to address the complaints they received from irate citizens inconvenienced by Con Ed's excavation projects. In Brattleboro there is no such slogan, perhaps because Brattleboro's Public Works Department handles such complaints effectively. Such preventative maintenance is necessary to keep Brattleboro's water arteries free of "municipal utility artery disease."

 Stormy Weather

People have grown accustomed to minute-to-minute reporting of weather conditions and take the five-day forecast for granted.

The paths of various weather systems have become a routine part of the 24-hour news service. Fortunately, such reporting, while at times thought to be overly dramatized, gives people plenty of warning before a possible disaster takes place.

In September 1938 this was not the case. But setting aside the fact that television and 24-hour news service was not yet available, radio (with AM and short wave transmission), telephones, and telegraph service were available. The responsibility to provide advance warning of a hurricane approaching and report it was the task of the forecasters of the Washington D.C. Weather Bureau office. In September 1938 the Bureau made a tragic decision.

Charlie Pierce, 28, a junior staff person at the Bureau in 1938, is credited with recognizing the danger of the hurricane reaching the coast because of a strong Bermuda high pressure system that could direct the hurricane toward New England. He was overruled by senior staff. A report to the Bureau of extremely low barometric pressures recorded by the passenger ship *Carinthia*, which was in the area, was also ignored.

History tells us what followed. The storm traveled at a forward speed of 60 mph and at times greater. With wind gusts as high as 200 mph, it hit the south shore of Long Island and traveled across the Island and Long Island Sound, where it hit the coasts of Rhode Island and Connecticut. It traveled farther inland through Massachusetts, Vermont, and into Canada. In its wake there was enormous loss of life and damage to property.

The lack of warning played a major role in leaving people vulnerable, especially in areas where rising water blocked an exit route for them. As trees were uprooted and fell, they took with them power and telephone lines. Battery-powered radios were not a regular fixture in the home in 1938 so, with the absence of these utilities, electronic communication came to a halt soon after the storm reached an area.

In Brattleboro, families were suffering similar effects of the storm. Brattleboro resident Steve Baker recalls living on Chestnut Hill when the storm struck. His dad was out in the family car on an errand, causing even more concern for Steve's mother as she rounded everyone up in their living room, praying all the time as they watched large trees around the house fall. "I was in third grade at the time and looked forward to being off from school for a few days and able to play in the fallen trees,"

Steve chuckled.

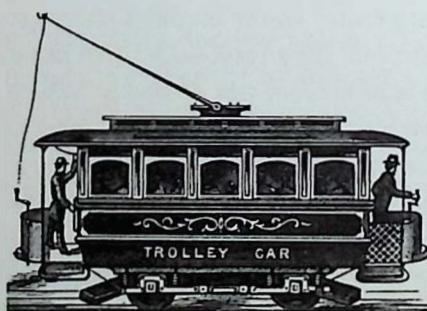
Many large trees were uprooted and crashed across roads blocking travel. The Whetstone Brook developed such force that it took out the iron bridge on Williams Street, and chimneys fell from the buildings as the wind swept across the area. The National Guard had to be called out to assist in the rescue efforts.

The cleanup was an enormous undertaking. Chain saws were not as common a tool as they are today, making the task that much harder. Members of the Work Progress Administration (WPA) helped town highway crews open roads and reconnect people to their neighbors.

Technology has improved, but more importantly, a lesson was learned about the need for advance warning and being prepared for storms. Brattleboro's Public Works director, Steve Barrett, said that the staff monitors the U.S. Weather Bureau online reports as well as the television daily weather updates. If heavy rains are expected, crews go out and check that culverts are free of debris, and sandbags are loaded. A prediction of heavy winds results in the chain saws and trucks being filled with gas and readied for service.

Barrett also said that before computers and television, a telephone relay system was employed by public works departments who would call each other to report weather conditions. If the storm was traveling from west to east, as many do, a call from the Bennington Public Works Department describing the storm's severity was welcomed by its counterpart in Brattleboro.

The Brattleboro Public Works staff still checks their vintage barometer on the office wall, to be sure the "high-tech" crowd didn't miss anything.





## Signs Are Us

In the 1870s, the spoken word was first transmitted beyond the range of normal conversation thanks to the efforts of Alexander Graham Bell and others with the development of the telephone. This was followed by the arrival of radio and television. Technology has created satellites, circling the world, making voice transmission instantaneous and worldwide even for the deaf or hard of hearing person. However, this was not always the case. The deaf and hard of hearing were living in a world of people who spoke a language they could not hear and therefore could not understand. Communication for these individuals was often limited to sign language, but always in the presence of another person.

Signing for the deaf and hard of hearing is similar to what travelers do in a country where they do not speak the language. They communicate by making gestures with their hands (signing) to make their thoughts understood. Over time, the use of sign language among the deaf community became more standardized and sophisticated. In 1620 Juan Pablo de Bonet published what is believed to be the first book for the teaching of sign language by standardizing common gestures, and developing a system of finger positions that represented the letters in the alphabet, which in turn could be used for finger spelling. This was followed in 1775 when the first free school for the teaching of deaf people was founded in Paris by Abbe Charles Michel de L'Epee.

In the United States, Martha's Vineyard was the home of many deaf people originating from hereditary factors among the early settlers. These individuals developed their own sign language later known as Martha's Vineyard Sign Language, which merged with mainland sign language and became American Sign Language.

In the early 1900s, more schools developed for the express purpose of teaching deaf children, with combinations of sign language and lip reading. Brattleboro became part of this movement when the Austine School for the Deaf was incorporated in 1904.

The school came about as a result of the generosity of Colonel William Austine (1815-1904) who left \$50,000 in his estate to build a hospital to provide "temporary treatment of strangers or local residents peculiarly situated." This may have been Col. Austine's intention at the time he wrote his will; however, when he died, the Brattleboro Memorial Hospital was about to open, offering the very services Col. Austine had intended for his hospital. Some alternative suggestions were put forth including a tubercular hospital, which was blocked by the local government.

As often happens in a decision-making process such as this, unexpected influences come into play. The Honorable Clarke C. Fitts, Attorney General of the State of Vermont, was one of the executors of Col. Austine's estate and, more importantly perhaps, his wife Maude L.E. Fitts was a former teacher of the deaf. In January 1911, the Vermont State Assembly enabled the land to be purchased and the Austine School for both deaf and blind children opened in 1912, offering services to 16 children and expanded to an enrollment of 29 the following year. In 1917, because of the opening of the Perkins Institute, a school for blind children, the Austine School focused on the teaching of the deaf and hard of hearing children.

A significant breakthrough of the communication barriers for the deaf and hard of hearing was the arrival of the electronic hearing aid. Ear trumpets had worked by catching sound close to its source and transmitting it via a tube to the listener's ear; however, the electronic hearing aid proved to be a considerable improvement, being less cumbersome and able to amplify the sound.

Teletype provided for the rapid transmission of written information, but e-mail took over and offered those who use it instant communication over long distances, often with hand held pagers. With telephones, digital cable, and satellites transmitting video images, the deaf and hard of hearing are able to use sign language to communicate with others via a video image. The Austine School incorporated these advances in technology into their curriculum.

The year 2004 was the 100th anniversary since the incorporation of the Austine School, now the Vermont Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. This event was celebrated by the students and staff, who joined with the Brattleboro Historical Society to present an exhibit of the history of the Austine School and the teaching of the hard of hearing. The exhibit was shown at the Vermont Historical Society's Expo in June 2004 at the Tunbridge World's Fair Grounds, Tunbridge, Vermont.



## The Canal Street School: One of Brattleboro's Architectural Treasures

There has been a long-standing tradition of two pupils, chosen each day, to ring the 1,118 pound bell located in the Canal Street School's bell tower. The ringing of the bell signals the start of the school day. Often this type of cultural continuity in social customs and institutions is looked upon with pride. Such is the case of the alumni of the Canal Street School. In Kathryn L. Appel's April 29, 1998, middle school report on the Canal Street School, she reflects back to her days at the Canal Street School mentioning the ringing of the bell and stating that "The first day with Ms. Fines in kindergarten was the scariest day ever in my life. But when I saw her dog Betsy, I fell in love with the school." At age 21, Kathryn still gives the Canal Street School a special place in her memory.

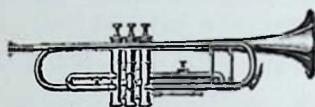
The Canal Street School was opened in 1893. A building list by Leland M. Roth Garland Publishing, Inc. lists the Canal Street School as the Brattleboro School and indicates that the cost for the design was the fee for the draftsman's time. McKim, Mead & White designed the Boston Public Library, many of the Columbia University buildings, the first Madison Square Garden, the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, the Wells Fountain in Brattleboro, in addition to many major public and private buildings of the period. The selection of this prestigious New York architectural firm came about because William Rutherford Mead, a partner in the firm, was from Brattleboro. He had continued to show interest in Brattleboro's development at the time as did portrait artist Robert Gordon Hardie, also a native of Brattleboro, who designed and painted the school's clock face. These gentlemen were probably all brought together by Col. Levi K. Fuller, a longtime resident of Brattleboro and vice president of the Estey Organ Company who served as Governor of Vermont from 1892 to 1894.

On June 19, 1891, the *Vermont Phoenix* reported, "A considerable number of our citizens have examined with great interest during the past week the plans for the proposed new schoolhouse on Canal Street, which Col. L.K. Fuller and R.G. Hardie, the artist, procured to be drawn at their own expense by the well-known New York architects' firm of McKim, Mead & White."

The purchase of the Seth Thomas clock for the tower was by subscriptions. The bell, cast by Meneely & Co., of West Troy, New York, was obtained, including its mountings, for a cost of \$247.66. It came with a five-year warranty. This 1,118 pound bell was put in place by a Mr. Grant

for \$50. He accomplished this major undertaking by using a team of four workhorses on what is now Prospect Street Hill behind the school and a block and tackle rigging to hoist the bell to the bell tower, where it remains today. The building's facade is mountain stone, giving local character to the building's appearance.

Shortly before the school's opening the Town Auditor's Report of 1892 states that "The commanding position of the building, its substantial construction in stone, and its cheerful outlook make it a just occasion of local pride, while promises great usefulness." The Canal Street School is one of Brattleboro's architectural treasures.



## Brattleboro's Kids at Play

"Just sit there and be still." This often heard grown-up's admonition, to a child, is pure folly because everyone knows that it just isn't in a youngster's being to be still. Action is what it's all about. Play time is the most important time, and when toys are not available, kids can invent their own. The child's imagination is what makes an object become a toy. Mud becomes pies, sticks become swords, towels become capes and maybe turbans. This game of "pretend" is what it's all about.

Many of the games that children play do not involve toys, not even the made-up kind. The players interact according to a set of rules, and there is often a competitive aspect or simply an element of chance leading to a winner. An example of this type of game is Odds and Evens that, according to the Museum and Archive of Games Index, dates back to ancient Rome. It is the game where each player identifies him- or herself as odd or even. The players make a fist and after the count of three, thrust open their hand extending one or more fingers. If the total number of fingers extended by both players totals an odd number, the player who had declared "Odds" wins. The converse is true with even numbers. Of course, there are variations to this game, but keep in mind that all you need to play it is your fingers. The next step up in "game sophistication"

might be tug-of-war, where a piece of rope is used. Knucklebones, an early form of Jacks, was played with the knucklebones of sheep and the toss of a pebble. The spinning of hoops was played with simple objects and led to the popularity of the Hula Hoop in the 1950s.

Most toys were ones improvised and fashioned by the kids playing with them, but some were made by the grown-ups in the family. Dolls and fancy toy boxes often came into a child's life as the result of the labors of someone thoughtful enough to take the time to make them. Many such toys were then handed down to younger siblings. Toys become special because of the way they enter a child's life—a birthday or a present from a special person or, more importantly, just the right toy at just the right time for the right occasion. What good is a pair of ice skates for a birthday in July? Most adults can name a favorite toy they played with as a child.

While one can assume that Mr. Claus's North Pole operation has been in existence for some time, it was not until the Industrial Revolution in the mid-late 1800s that toys were mass produced and promoted in mail-order catalogues. Brattleboro was part of this scene.

The S.A. Smith Toy Company was founded in 1863 and was located in Weatherhead Hollow in Guilford. First, it only manufactured children's baby carriages. The original factory was destroyed by fire in 1868. A replacement factory was built, only to be destroyed by fire again in 1880. After this fire, the company moved to Brattleboro. It was located on the corner of Frost and Elm Streets. In 1899 another fire burned the factory to the ground leaving close to 100 workmen without jobs. By this time, the company had expanded its line of children's toys to include sleds, carts, wagons, tricycles—all a product of fine workmanship. The company enjoyed a brisk business, published a catalogue, and was a major employer in Brattleboro.

Fires were the plague of many factories during this period. Construction with fire retardant materials, fire codes, and sprinkler systems were not part of the factory experience, as it is today. In this case, as with the Estey Organ Company in Brattleboro, the materials used to manufacture toys and parlor organs were wood, glue, paint, and varnish, all highly flammable.

The S.A. Smith Manufacturing Co. made exceptionally high-quality toys. They even carried a line of toy kits called "Kon-Struct-It." Such a kit enabled a youngster to make their own toy and decorate it with the paint supplied in the kit. No tools or nails were necessary. All the pieces fit together and were secured by wooden pegs. Just think how advanced this company was to be offering what one could later call

"Instructional Toys." The company touted this line of toys by stating in their catalogue that "It will please the youngster who wants to build something for his own amusement, by the fact that he has a toy, when complete, of his own manufacture."

Toys have been part of everyone's personal history and of Brattleboro's history. There is still a toy company operating in the area—the Cooperman Fife and Drum Company in North Westminster manufactures reproductions of historic toys.

## Strike Up the Band

It's hard to travel in the United States and not see a bandstand. Almost every community has one. Brattleboro has two—one in Esteyville and the other on the Common. Major cities have them, sometimes called band shells because their appearance is the likeness of a shell. People seem to enjoy the experience of listening to music in the outdoors as the success of Tanglewood demonstrates. How this phenomenon came about is surprising, but quite logical.

In the latter part of the 1800s, the United States population was moving from farms to urban settings, where industry was developing at an unprecedented pace. Large groups of newcomers from many nationalities and cultures, but wanting to be "American," were also settling in these towns to work in the mills and factories. Housing patterns changed from rural to urban and the tenement (meaning "to hold more") along with company housing, became the family dwelling. It was cramped, yardless, gardenless and hot in the summertime. The need for public space grew, and many communities developed public places, either planned, such as formal parks and commons, or by happenstance, where people found a nice cool spot to congregate by a stream, a field, or just the tenement's front steps. These were the areas where people entertained themselves with picnics, ball games, and music. The music was often provided by a brass band.

In 1810, Joseph Haliday, an Irish instrument maker, patented a keyed bugle. By incorporating a valve, on the brass instrument, he was able to standardize the intervals of pitch which enabled brass instruments to play both melodies and harmonies by using the diatonic and chromatic scales. Adolphe Sax, in addition to inventing the saxophone, was also a pioneer in brass instrument design, offering matched valved brass instruments. Since brass instruments produce a sound at greater volume than woodwind and stringed instruments they could be played

outside and still be heard and therefore not limited to concert halls. By 1850, there were many chromatic brass instruments offering their unique sound in all tonal registers. The mass production of brass instruments made them available to the soon-to-be musicians at lesser cost. Brass bands were on their way.

A little promotion never hurts, as was the case when promoter David Blakely lured John Philip Sousa from the United States Marine Band to form a band of his own. Sousa (1854-1932) enjoyed great popularity as leader of the United States Marine Band, but it was the success of two cross country tours in 1891 and 1892 that convinced tour manager David Blakely that the patriotic style of Sousa's music would sell. This was the music played on town bandstands throughout the country, including Brattleboro.

According to S. Frederick Starr, author of *Bandstands & American Urbanism*, Richard Morris Hunt (1827-1895) is credited as being one of the first American architects to design a bandstand. This fact has many ironies. Hunt was born and raised in Brattleboro, but designed his bandstand in 1849 while a student in Paris. The American architect's idea of a bandstand was not popular with Americans, who preferred a simpler design; however, it does not appear that Hunt's career was hurt by the lack of enthusiasm for his bandstand design. A short list of the buildings that Hunt designed includes the base to the Statue of Liberty, W.K. Vanderbilt's houses in New York and Newport, the Fogg Museum of Fine Arts, Harvard College, and the entrance to New York's Central Park.

The Esteyville bandstand is the second bandstand at a location once known as Fuller Park. Levi K. Fuller was an officer of the Estey Organ Company and Governor of Vermont. According to the late Ruth Holden, a longtime resident of Esteyville, the earlier bandstand was smaller and a simpler design. In the June 1910 the *Vermont Phoenix* reported that "Esteyville will soon have a bandstand and new quarters for the hose cart. The two will be combined in a structure which will be erected by the bailiffs on Fuller Park." The space to house the hose cart (used for firefighting) explains why the foundation is approximately eight feet above the ground. It is a hexagonal structure and is located in a small triangular park where Estey, Chestnut, and Pleasant Streets meet.

The bandstand on the common, built in the late 1800s, and also a hexagonal structure, has been the setting for many political as well as musical events. The roof was cedar shales before it was replaced with slate. It had a flagpole on the top, railing on all on all six sides, and electric lights around the ceiling. Baffle partitions were added to improve the acoustics.

 Don't Forget to Write

For the first time, people were able to travel more easily beyond their immediate communities as a result of the expansion of the railroad in the second half of the 1800s. The railroads offered the traveler accommodations that not only included passenger cars, but dining and sleeping cars as well, which enabled them to stay on board the train several days until they reached their destination. The choice of destinations also grew, as train service expanded to connect smaller and more remote communities to larger cities. People were now able to visit places never before accessible to them except by horse-drawn wagons.

The train also improved the United States Postal Service by carrying mail, and in some cases sorting it in the train's mail car. The telegraph office, often part of the railroad station since most of the telegraph lines ran parallel to the tracks, enabled the traveler to "wire ahead" to let people know if there was any unexpected delay. The country was shrinking as technology provided faster and more efficient modes of travel and communication. It was now possible for people to travel great distances, not only for business but perhaps, for the first time, pleasure. One could visit relatives who may have moved to larger communities and urban centers in search of better employment. The reverse was true as well. A vacation could be planned to take advantage of a particular attractive area of the country or a resort hotel offering fine food and recreation.

Such changes in life style often are accompanied by the creation of a new market for something never used before. In this case, it was the picture postcard, which was authorized for use by an Act of Congress on May 19, 1898. It was an instant success. What better way to keep in touch with friends and family left behind or perhaps show off a little about how nice a place they chose to visit was? Surely the recipient of the picture postcard would understand that the traveler, owing to the demands of travel, simply did not have the time to write a proper letter. The image on one side of the card let folks back home know what the place was like and the message such as, "Having a wonderful time, wish you were here. Love, Alice" added the personal touch.

The United States Post Office Department offered the first postal card with postage preprinted on the card, absent the picture, on May 13, 1873, but it was the picture postcard that had great appeal for the traveler.

Small towns, cities, hotels, restaurants, and other points of interest were all anxious to have a photograph or lithograph printed on a postcard. This card would be mailed by their visitors offering free adver-

tisement of what they had to offer. The lithograph was more popular because of its bright colors and frequently offered a romanticized portrayal of the place from which the card was sent. Humorous cards also became available, presenting the sender with an opportunity to put a smile on the face of the recipients.

Before the hand-held camera and the arrival of color film, the picture postcard also provided a record of one's travels. Albums were filled with such cards purchased by travelers upon their return home. Today, collectors of historic postcards do the same only with postcards selected with a particular theme in mind, such as national parks or state capitol buildings.

Brattleboro was part of the early picture postcard scene, with lithographs depicting the Brooks Hotel, the Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, the Connecticut River, the Union Station, Estey Organ factory buildings, the early tourist homes, cabins and motels, along with some cards humorous in their time.

## That's Entertainment

In the late 1800s there was a major shift in population from farms to urban centers. Americans had discovered how to make things with the use of interchangeable parts and were anxious to take advantage of the growing markets for these manufactured products. A large labor force was needed to work in the developing mills and factories, causing Americans to leave their farms and seek work in the growing urban centers. So great was the demand for workers that newly arrived immigrants were also recruited. Many people were no longer living in single family homes, but in apartment buildings, often owned by the company for whom they worked. They did not have a garden to grow their vegetables, or a yard to catch some fresh air. Life was focused on work and raising children, many of whom also worked in the factories. Automobiles had not yet arrived and owning a horse and carriage was not something workers could afford. For them travel around the town was limited to walking.

Just as factory and mill owners addressed the need for housing with "company housing," other enterprising individuals developed an early form of mass transit, the trolley. Brattleboro's trolley started service on July 30, 1895. It enabled people to travel greater distances to shop in places other than the company store, attend church services, and perhaps visit a place for a little fun.

Many communities during this period met this need for recreation with the development of the amusement park that was accessible by the trolley. In fact, these parks were sometimes referred to as "trolley parks," but the name "amusement park" was more accurate. For people living a rather humdrum life, the amusement park was a pleasurable diversion by providing them with some fun, excitement, entertainment, and a chance to socialize with one another in an attractive setting. Brooklyn's Coney Island and Brattleboro's Island Park both came into being during this period, although admittedly different in scale; however, it has been reported that over 1,500 American amusement parks existed in 1919.

The spot of land in the middle of the Connecticut River, across from Brattleboro, was used primarily for farming, but also supported other activities. "The Island," as it was locally called, was connected to New Hampshire and Vermont by bridges, the first one built in 1804. There has been a total of seven bridges since then. Most of the them were lost due to floods and ice damage. A toll house and several private homes shared the island, as did a logging camp that was set up to accommodate the loggers working the log drives. The island also had a bowling alley and barroom, undoubtedly built to meet the needs of the thirsty bowler. Prior to and after the development of Island Park, it was also the site of the circus that arrived in Brattleboro via the railroad. In addition to the circus parade down Brattleboro's Main Street, elephants could be seen bathing in the Connecticut River.

The building of a grandstand, overlooking a baseball diamond, in 1909 and a pavilion in 1911 which incorporated the grandstand, bowling alley, and barroom are what turned this island into an amusement park. The island in the Connecticut River was renamed and promoted as "Island Park." It was an instant success.

One has to think about what it was like to live without radio, television, telephone, e-mail and the Internet. Communication was limited to the United States mail service and for something special, the telegraph. Most information was obtained from the newspaper or passed by word of mouth or handbills posted around the neighborhood. This setting was isolating for many people, so when an opportunity for social interaction was offered, it was taken.

The opportunity to watch a baseball game played by members of the Twin State Professional Baseball League was too good to pass up and the new "Island Park" offered such an opportunity with its baseball diamond and grandstand seating of 1,200. When baseball was not being played, other events were offered, including visiting politicians as President William Howard Taft, circus performances, grand pageants cel-

ebrating Brattleboro's history, wrestling matches, Miss Universe and Miss America appearances, and the showing of silent movies. Dance bands were booked for the pavilion's dance hall. Paul Whiteman's band made such an appearance. Those who could not get a ticket were able to dance to the music of these bands on the bridge leading to the island. Boating trips on the Connecticut River were offered by a boat service leaving from the Island Park.

All this was accessible to the people of Brattleboro by simply boarding the trolley that let them off at the intersection of Bridge and Main Streets. A short walk across the bridge got them to Island Park.

## Getting Hitched in Brattleboro

**J**une is thought to be the month for weddings. The origin of this thinking is that the month is named after the Roman goddess Juno, protector of marriages. Unfortunately, today, many couples who wish a June wedding do not get their wish because the places that can accommodate wedding receptions are all booked.

Before the growth of urban centers in the United States, most marriages took place in the family home. As the country's industrial development took hold, and more people were living in apartments, not large houses, the venue for the reception moved to hotels, which operated restaurants and had ballrooms. Today there are inns and catering facilities meeting this need.

There is a lot of tradition associated with the wedding. All kinds of things must be done to bring good luck to the couple. The groom shouldn't see the bride in her wedding gown before she marches down the aisle. The bride throws her bouquet; the girl catching it is next to be married. Shoes are tied to the couple's carriage, later a stretch limo. The groom carries the bride across the threshold of their home the first time they enter. There are many such traditions.

The wedding ceremony has been performed in this country in ways other than what we consider as the traditional wedding. There is the elopement, Las Vegas has the "Say I Do Wedding Drive-Thru," the "Shot Gun Wedding," the "War Bride," and the "Tom Thumb Wedding."

The original "Tom Thumb Wedding" occurred on February 10, 1863, when Charles Sherwood Stratton, named "General Tom Thumb" by the circus entrepreneur P.T. Barnum, married Lavinia Warren at New York City's Grace Episcopal Church. The couple, both dwarfs, attracted a lot of publicity, thanks to the efforts of P.T. Barnum. The newlyweds were

entertained by President Lincoln, Queen Victoria, France's King Louis Philippe, and Spain's Queen Isabella. This publicity ignited an interest in creating social, often fund-raising events by staging elaborate wedding ceremonies using children.

Brattleboro's Universalist Church was host to such a wedding on July 3, 1896. It was called "A Midget Wedding," and in 1934, the Methodist Church in Williamsville was host to a "Tom Thumb Wedding." According to the *Brattleboro Reformer*, the production was directed and costumed by Miss Pauline Mayo of New York City. Both events appeared to be for fund raising and an opportunity for young children to perform in a pageant-like event. The paper reported the event, with a description of the bride's gown, the flowers, and what the organist played. The names of those in attendance were listed and, if in the wedding party, a description of what they wore was offered.

While weddings conjure up images of love and a lifetime together, many of the early laws related to marriage have often dealt with the preservation of family wealth. By getting married, the bride lost her rights to hold property, and custom supported the idea that the bride's father offered her to her future husband complete with a dowry. After the marriage, the wife no longer had control of these assets and the bride changed her last name to that of her husband. Much of this has changed. State laws have been passed to protect the property rights of women when they marry. The use of Ms. can replace Miss and Mrs., therefore no longer revealing the marital status of the woman. Former First Lady and Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton continues to use her maiden name, as do many contemporary women. The irony of such name-retention is that the name used is often that of the woman's father's family and not her mother's. These name changes have always raised havoc with genealogists, but this new trend gives them another name to trace.

The concept of marriage has also taken many twists and turns over the years in this country. Today, couples living together is not as scandalous as it was once was. There was a time when divorce was seen in a less than positive light, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints supported polygamy until 1890, when the practice was discontinued. The latest such change to the idea of marriage occurred when the State of Vermont passed the Civil Union Law enabling couples of the same gender to form a legal bond offering them the same legal protections offered to couples of opposite gender.

Vermont became the first state in the Union to have such a law and Brattleboro's Town Clerk, Annette Cappy, became the first to issue

a Civil Union license. History was made when she opened her office at 12:01 on July 1, 2000, the date the law became effective, to issue a license to Carolyn Conrad and Kathleen Peterson. Carolyn and Kathleen became the first couple to take advantage of Vermont's Civil Union Law.

## Building a Community Bond: Living Memorial Park Stands in Memory of W.W.II Vets

ne of the criteria for a memorial is that it in some way will offer hope for the future and continuation of life. Memorials serve not only their stated purpose, but as markers of society's tastes on how people choose to honor their heroes.

Brattleboro broke with tradition in 1944 in honoring its heroes with the creation of Living Memorial Park. The idea for such a memorial was presented by William H. Evans of Townshend, who had moved to the area after retiring from the newspaper business in Philadelphia. On June 21, 1944, Evans wrote an open letter to the *Brattleboro Daily Reformer* and the *Vermont Phoenix* suggesting the creation of a park as a "living memorial to honor those men and women soon to return." His idea of the memorial was focused on the living and future, especially for young people, but not to the exclusion of other age groups.

Evans further suggested that the funding for such a park be raised by the purchase of United States War Bonds and initiated the effort by purchasing the first bond. The *Brattleboro Daily Reformer* and the *Vermont Phoenix* showed its support by purchasing 10 bonds for its employees who were serving in the war. Additional support was coordinated by the Kiwanis Club, headed by R. Willard Beebe, resulting in the creation of a group known as "Brattleboro's Living War Memorial," with bond sales totaling \$33,875 with maturity 10 years away. At that time the money could be used for the development of the park.

Evans' idea was just the right fit for the resources of the town and people's sense of patriotism. Supporting the war effort was every American's job. Sacrifices through rationing, work in defense factories, volunteering in the Civil Defense and Red Cross efforts, and buying U.S. War Bonds were expected of and gladly offered by Americans.

The sale of war bonds was heavily promoted by the government. Actress Dorothy Lamour made many public appearances for the sale of these bonds. One such appearance was in Brattleboro when on September 19, 1942, Lamour stood on the bandstand at the Common and en-

couraged everyone to buy bonds to help with the war effort. She was so successful that she was sometimes referred to as the "bond bombshell."

Shortly before her death in 1996, she was asked what she considered the highlights of her career. Her role in the sale of the war bonds was cited.

Brattleboro residents were ready for what Evans had in mind. People had endured 10 years of economic depression followed by a world war. Normal life in America had become a hardship. For the first time in many years, the period following the war offered better economic times and opportunity to rejoin family and start new ones. Leisure time became part of life's routine and the possibility of a town park with a swimming pool, picnic areas, ball fields, ice skating, and skiing was most welcome.

In 1954, the bonds were approaching their maturity date and "Brattleboro's Living War Memorial" was about to happen. The Clark farm on Guilford Street was for sale and the Clark family agreed to sell the property for the amount of the matured bonds. The committee presented the town with an offer to purchase the property and give it to the town of Brattleboro as a year-round recreation facility if the town would agree to appropriate the money needed to create a swimming pool. The offer was accepted and on May 19, 1955, the property was deeded to the town.

## Parading

Ever since the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and the adoption of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, Americans have cherished their right to free speech and assembly. As the country developed, parades and marches have been a way to get a message across to the community.

There have been all kinds of parades with all kinds of messages and celebrating many occasions: Fourth of July, Memorial Day, Macy's Thanksgiving Day, the Mummers, St. Patrick's Day, Gay Pride, U.S. serviceman returning home from W.W.I and W.W.II, and the antiwar marches of the 1960s and '70s.

On March 21, 1965, Martin Luther King led a historic march, protected by federal troops, from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, challenging the Jim Crow laws of the South. The suffragist movement brought many women out to parade and march in an effort to effect social change. They were successful with the passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution.

These organized processions, often down the main streets of a com-

munity, have been a way to call greater attention to an event or issue of interest to the community. The parade can help celebrate an event and make it a joyous occasion or, as in the case President Lincoln's funeral, a sad one.

Parades and marches have become somewhat synonymous. A parade has a line of march and there are many parades and marches in which the participants don't even walk-in-step, but simply stroll along. Irving Berlin's Easter Parade calls attention to the occasion when well-dressed ladies chose Easter as an opportunity to stroll down 5th Avenue in New York City and show off their new spring clothes. John Philip Sousa offered music in 2/4 time that, when played by the parade's bands, inspired many to keep-in-step (march). The slow cadence of the funeral dirge, played during funeral processions, connotes an entirely different feeling. Other times, rhythmic chants—for example, "two four six eight, now's the time to integrate"—were offered to provide a strident we-mean-business tone to a march or parade of protest.

Parades and marches have their own special way of generating an emotional response either with the behavior of the marchers, their message, the music played, or the pageantry offered by the props used.

Towns like to show off their fire and police department equipment, marching politicians like to show themselves off, and floats, depicting special themes, all add to the event.

As one would expect, not all parades are well received. Brattleboro has had its share of controversial parades. On July 27, 1991, a group of bare-breasted women marched down Main Street to call attention to what they saw as the hypocrisy inherent in how society defines obscenity. Several years ago, people opposed to nuclear power marched in the 4th of July parade causing supporters of nuclear power to complain. The same was true of the issue of abortion.

A scheduled march down Brattleboro's Main Street to protest the war in Iraq was a reason for the Brattleboro police department to film the event clandestinely and place the municipal building in "lock down" status citing security concerns as the reason for their action.

Ironically, this action, and not the parade, caused complaints from some in the community.

The right to assemble and to speak out are part of the American scene, because the founding fathers of the country thought to guarantee these rights.

Brattleboro, like many other communities in the United States, seems to have been able to handle all kinds of parades and marches, popular and unpopular, during its history and will undoubtedly continue to do so.

 Travelers' Sleep-overs

In Brattleboro, before the arrival of the railroad in 1849, people traveled on horseback or by horse-drawn carriage and stagecoach. If their destination was more than a day's ride, they could camp on the side of the road or stop at a tavern or an inn. Two such taverns in Brattleboro were the Arms Tavern, opened in 1762, which was located where the Retreat Farm farmhouse is now (a plaque marks the spot), and the Hayes Tavern, opened around 1780 in West Brattleboro where the State Liquor Store parking lot is now located. Both these establishments, as well as similar ones along the routes connecting towns, provided the weary traveler with food, drink, and a bed for the night.

After the arrival of the railroad, hotels started to replace the inns and taverns because of the need to be near the railroad station where passengers and their luggage could be taken from the station to the hotel in a horse-drawn station wagon. In most cases, the station wagon was a little fancier than a farm wagon, perhaps to impress visitors to the town and maybe justify the fare. Once at the hotel, the traveler could enjoy meals served in the hotel's dining rooms, visit with others in the sitting rooms, visit the town's shops and attend performances offered at the local opera house. Brattleboro had all this with its many hotels all located near the railroad station, and the Town Hall, located where A Candle in the Night is now, offered theatrical and musical performances. If travelers wanted to visit someone in a neighboring town that was not served by the railroad, they could take a stagecoach that made regularly scheduled trips.

All this changed with the arrival of the automobile in the early part of the 1900s. Travelers, often whole families, were going from place to place in their newly acquired motor cars. Since many of the roads used were the same dirt roads once used by the horse and wagon, the trip was nothing short of high adventure. Flat tires, mechanical malfunction, overheated engines, and of course getting stuck in the mud were all part of the trip. Overnight accommodations consisted of camping in a field. While there were still some taverns and inns in the rural areas and hotels in the larger towns, they did not seem to meet the growing needs of this new type of American traveler. The automobile could take you and your family places at lower cost than railroad tickets and to locations not served by the railroad. The automobile was exciting and offered much greater mobility and flexibility of schedule for those fortunate enough to own one. These motorists were a new kind of traveler. The automobile manufacturers, in an effort to sell more cars, lobbied to have roads

paved thus making automobile travel faster and more comfortable.

Overnight accommodations were also addressed first by farmers who turned their fields into tourist camps by building some outhouses, piping water to the camps, and sometimes operating a small store that sold food that could be cooked at the camp. The more enterprising farmer installed a gas pump. It did not take long for these tourist camps to take the next step and offer small cabins that provided toilet and shower facilities and beds. The travelers could rent mattresses, but were expected to provide their own bed linen. This automobile-touring group shunned cities and hotels and welcomed the idea of simply driving their car up to a tourist cabin and spending the night. Soon these cabins became attached to each other and their name changed to motel.

As more and more families traveled by automobile, the demand for inexpensive and simple overnight accommodations grew. Just as the farmer created the tourist camp and later tourist cabin, the tourist home or guest house made its debut. The tourist home was simply a large private home that had several bedrooms that could be rented to the automobile traveler. They were often operated by elderly couples who needed the additional income and had extra bedrooms. The bathroom facilities were shared and the rates were lower than the tourist cabin. The bed and breakfast establishment has assumed this role with the addition of the morning meal.



## Seeing the Forest for the Trees

Trees have meant a lot to people and for different reasons. Initially they served as building materials and a source of food. Early settlers cleared the land of trees to develop farms. Trees were felled, milled and shaped to build houses, barns, churches, public gathering places, and later, factory and other industrial buildings. They were what wagons and boats were made of and, when burned, heated our buildings and cooked our food. Paper mills turned trees into paper.

As more and more trees were cut, the source of trees became more distant from where they would be used or processed. Before the railroad, and later trucks, rivers were used to float the newly felled trees down to the mills.

Wood was an easily attainable resource and lent itself to all kinds of manufacturing effort. In Brattleboro, the S.A. Smith Toy Company used wood for their product, as did the Estey Organ Company, and not to forget the Church Toilet Seat factory on Flat Street, whose sales slogan

was "The Best Seat in the House." Cersosimo Lumber Company and their trucks, carrying newly felled trees, can be seen traveling through town to their plant to be processed for market. The maple tree is strongly associated with the state of Vermont as part of its maple syrup industry.

Over time, trees became part of our folklore. One of the early political lies was the story told about President George Washington, who, as a young boy, chopped down the family's cherry tree and when confronted by his father didn't lie about it. (In this case it wasn't the president who told this made-up story, but his biographer, Parson Mason Locke Weems.)

As communities developed, the tree eventually took on a more aesthetic and recreational role. Town's roadways became tree-lined and often took the tree's name. In addition to Main Street, Brattleboro, as well as other towns, has its Elm, Chestnut, Maple, Pine, Cedar Streets, and Asylum Street became Linden Street. The planting of trees along the side of the road and in front of the homes provided shade and therefore lower summertime temperatures for those living there. Prior to air-conditioning, sitting on one's front porch in the shade of these trees was something to look forward to. Often a tree was planted in the yard of a home to commemorate an event, the purchase of the house, or the birth or death of a family member.

The thought of children climbing trees and playing in a tree house conjures up pleasant feelings. Such "housing starts" served as a rite of passage for kids to have their own space in which to make their special, and at times, "secret" plans for their next day's activities. The tree swings, some just an old automobile tire, also became part of the landscape.

Parks developed and trees were selected not only to provide shade, but for decorative purposes as well. Trees, known for their attractive springtime blossoms, became part of the setting. In Brattleboro, trees were selected for Plaza Park, the Common, Chestnut Hill, and the park behind Wells Fountain.

The arrival in the United States of the chestnut tree blight (1910-1920) and Dutch elm disease (1930s) caused these trees to wither and die. According to Oscar Stone, long associated with the care of trees in Brattleboro, elm trees were once the dominant tree on the grounds of the Brattleboro Retreat.

Trees continue to be important to Brattleboro as evidenced by the fact that in 2003 the town used a "Tree Advisory Board" to monitor the removal of trees and promote the planting of new ones. The Board applied for a grant to replace the trees removed from in front of the School for International Training because of a road widening project. In the fall

of 2003, a tree was planted at the Common to mark Brattleboro's 250th anniversary, and trees are included in Pliny Park on the corner of Main and High Streets.

## The Horseless Carriage at Brattleboro's Valley Fair

**V**alley Fair was an annual fall event in Brattleboro from 1886 to the 1930s at the fairgrounds where Brattleboro Union High School is now located. Storefronts were decorated with every type of banner or flag that could be found. The fairgrounds had a grandstand and a wide array of booths selling food (ice cream was a special treat before refrigeration), tintypes, cigars, drinks and souvenirs.

Bicycle and horse races, ox drawing contests, the ferris wheel and other exciting rides, a diving horse, hot air balloons and airplanes were all part of the fair. It was clearly Brattleboro's big party and an event that captured the citizen's sense of fun.

A large parade down Main Street was part of the event. Numerous bands and elaborately decorated floats were all on display, but it was the automobile during the early 1900s that captured everyone's interest. The automobile was new to the country and Brattleboro was not to be left out. Those lucky enough to own one were mighty proud of their new means of transportation. The automobiles were decorated and driven by their owners down Main Street to Valley Fair where everyone could take a close look and, in some cases, see it driven around the track in front of the grandstand. Shocking as it must have been, there was even a car driven by a woman!

## Brattleboro's Big Wheels Meet at Club

**I**t is not unusual to see a group of cyclists traveling down Main Street or along Route 30 as part of present-day sport and recreation.

Brattleboro has several stores that cater to the cyclist; however, the relationship of the bicycle and Brattleboro dating back to the 1800s is much stronger than most people realize.

It was at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876 when the "High Wheel Bicycle" was first introduced to America. The bicycle was a

huge success with the American public. This was before the automobile and while one could travel by horse, a self-powered vehicle enabled its owner to travel where and when they wanted. No need to saddle a horse or hitch-up the team to go someplace. Soon bicycle races, and speed records organized and recorded by bicycle clubs, began to take place. The first club was the Boston Bicycle Club, founded in 1878.

On May 1, 1880, only four years after the introduction of the bicycle to America, Brattleboro had its own Bicycle Club, first with 10 members and by 1895, 150. Originally, it was named the Brattleboro Bicycle Club and later the Vermont Wheel Club. Its president was Harry L. Emerson, who was also one of the founders of Emerson's Furniture Store.

Soon after its founding, the Vermont Wheel Club made a significant decision by leasing space in the Farmers' and Mechanics' block on Elliot Street (No. 51-55) to create a very upscale club facility with library, dining, and game rooms. Membership was no longer restricted to cyclists or "wheelman" as they were called. An entrance fee of \$10 and \$1 per month secured membership if you were a man of good character and standing.

In addition to races and other cycling events, the Vermont Wheel Club became known for many social and theatrical events. Many of their productions were performed at Brattleboro's Auditorium, which was located where A Candle in the Night and the Key Bank are now.

The club had a uniform of purple and white and used the emblem of a winged wheel. It hosted large, fancy balls and smaller parties on the roof garden. The club sponsored picnic outings and events at Valley Fair. The Vermont Wheel Club was clearly a social force in Brattleboro and elsewhere in Vermont.

On January 18, 1914, a fire completely destroyed the club facilities on Elliot Street. A year later the club's headquarters reopened at the same location, after the building was rebuilt and renamed the Abbott Block, and continued operation until it was disbanded in 1924.





## The Connecticut River Log Drive

**T**he construction of the Vernon Dam in 1909-1911 ended the log drives on the Connecticut River. Small drives continued to the north of the dam, but by 1916 the transport of logs was taken over by the railroad and eventually trucks.

There is no one person credited with the idea of transporting logs from where they are cut to the sawmill by floating them in rivers. Many major rivers in the country were used for this purpose. The Hudson and Mohawk Rivers in New York State and the Susquehanna River in New York and Pennsylvania were so used, as was the Connecticut. The first log drive on the Connecticut took place around 1869.

The need for wood for building materials and paper soared in the latter part of the 1800s. Early settlers could construct their homes and barns out of the timber and stones at the site. The felling of trees and the gathering of stones were also necessary to create tillable land. These early homes were made of whole logs shaped with an ax so that they would stay in position. (Remember that there were no log cabin kit homes at the time!) As communities grew, a consolidation of skills took place. A sawmill could provide the lumber for the whole settlement rather than each homeowner milling his own. Timber would be cut by loggers and brought to the local mill by wagons drawn by teams of horses or oxen. This seemed to work well until the location of the mill and the source of timber got farther apart because more and more trees were being harvested to meet the demand for wood for buildings in the ever-growing communities.

As urban centers and factories expanded, the need for paper also increased. How else were they going to keep records of all this activity?

Logging camps were established where the timber was to be harvested. The felled trees were transported by horse, and oxen-drawn wagons or skids, and later by small railroads, to the river's bank. This was done in the late fall and through the winter for several reasons. The foliage was gone, the sap was down, there were no mud problems because the ground was frozen hard, and the spring freshets in the rivers had not yet occurred. At the river's edge a series of logs would be attached end to end to form a boom, which was floated on the river. All other logs would then be placed in the river and held captive by the boom. When the spring freshets occurred and the river's water level and current increased, the logs would be released.

During a log drive, hundreds of loggers would arrive to see that the logs got to their destination. The logs used for paper mills floated on the

Connecticut from Colebrook, New Hampshire, to paper mills in Massachusetts. Working in gangs, these loggers, equipped with spiked shoes and poles, would ride the logs to poke and twist them on their way. When a jam formed, logs would start piling up. Loggers would have to look for the "key log" similar to a "key stone" (in an arch) and dislodge it. Dynamite was at times used, but only if other efforts failed because of the damage to the timber. It was a constant problem because logs did not behave well in the river. They were not equipped with a rudder or a shaped keel the way a boat is. Their move down river went well as long as they didn't hit a rock or another log and have their course changed. Loggers worked 10 and 12 hour days often standing in freezing cold water with little protection from the wind. It was a dangerous job.

The loggers working a drive would set up camps along the way. One such camp was located on an island in the middle of the Connecticut River in Brattleboro. (This island later became known as Island Park.) Meals were served at these camps. One report indicated that there wasn't a green piece of food on a plate. This was clearly a meat and potatoes, beans and bread kind of crowd. At some drives a barge-like craft traveled with the drive that provided space for meals and lodging.

Railroads replaced rivers for log transport and today the truck is playing the most dominant role in moving the logs from the forest to the mill. Brattleboro, a town that once had the logs moving in the Connecticut River, now has trucks laden with logs traveling its main street.

## Main Street's Ever-Changing Facade

In 2003, New York City's Central Park, the mammoth creation by landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, celebrated its 150th anniversary. Olmsted's contribution to the planned development of a major American city is cause for celebration.

Most early American settlements developed around natural resources such as rivers, harbors, or land suitable for farming. Little thought was given to the concept of city planning. And since early settlements were made up of people of like minds and tastes, little need for zoning laws existed then. Almost everyone in a particular community seemed to agree on what a building should look like. Not until the industrialization of the country, which brought with it a large immigrant population, with its diverse tastes, and the need for people to live near where they worked, did a community's inhabitants' conflicting interests need to be addressed. On the island of Manhattan, Olmsted met this challenge by

guaranteeing New Yorkers some green space as more and more of their farmland gave way to urban development.

Brattleboro, like other American settlements, developed in a similar way. Two natural resources—the Whetstone Brook and the Connecticut River—were conducive to industrial development. The Whetstone powered the mills and factories and the Connecticut provided a way to transport goods to larger markets. The two waterways were seen, not for their esthetic beauty, but as industrial aids, including a way to rid the town of its sewage.

The arrival of the railroad in Brattleboro hastened industrial development, but because the locomotives were fueled first by wood, then by coal, it was also the source of much air pollution. Merchants would close their windows when the train arrived so the soot from the coal-fired locomotive would not settle on items displayed in their store. Clothes drying on the line suffered a similar fate.

These facts of early industrial life, soot and sewage, were the reasons that the buildings on Main Street faced away from the railroad and the Connecticut River. The buildings were also sited to take advantage of the business being conducted at the time. Hotels and restaurants, for example, were located near the railroad station, the different shops near to each other. Brattleboro's theaters, school, churches, and library were also located in the area referred to as "downtown."

In 1869, Brattleboro's downtown suffered a catastrophic fire that destroyed many of the wooden buildings on the west side of Main Street between Elliot and High Streets. When these buildings were replaced with the Crosby Block in 1870 and the Brooks Hotel in 1874 brick was used on their exterior for better fire protection. In 1884, the Dunham Building was constructed on the east side of Main Street. In 1895 the Auditorium was added to the Town Hall where A Candle in the Night store is currently located. The Latchis Hotel and Theater complex made its appearance in 1938. On February 6, 1970, a building permit was issued which enabled Dunkin' Donuts to join Brattleboro on the corner of Main and High Streets, replacing a gas station, as one of Brattleboro's first national-chain coffee shops.

Some downtown buildings were "modernized." The Dunham Building's storefronts were covered with black glass, later barn wood, and most recently, copper. Mann's department store, now the location of Vermont Artisan Design, constructed a canopy over its main entrance. The Vermont National Bank, on the corner of Main and Elliot Streets, changed its whole facade to reflect the "look" of the period.

In the 1950s, an interstate highway was being built. This multilane

roadway with its banked curves enabled motorists to speed by and no longer through America's small towns. Box stores, national-chain restaurants and hotel operations replaced open land near interstate exits. This new form of retailing sucked the vitality from a community's main street causing many downtown areas to become ghost towns.

The sameness of strip malls, which denuded communities of their unique identities, has become a wake-up call, leading people to reevaluate what they have lost. America's downtowns offer a sense of community and a showcase of a town's specialness that strip development and shopping malls do not.

Ten Brattleboro storefronts had their facades upgraded in 2003. The former site of Dunkin' Donuts has become a restaurant and park, a transportation center opened, the Main Street Bridge has been completely redone, the Latchis movie theater and hotel complex has become a performing arts center, and a pedestrian pathway along the Whetstone Brook opened.

This happened because civic organizations joined forces with governmental agencies, using offered resources, to make the town's downtown worth a visit and a place to spend some time.



## Services Still Offered at the Former Methodist Church on Elliot Street

**T**he former Methodist Church, on Elliot Street, now the home of The Hotel Pharmacy, was completed in 1880. (The church has been vacated by its parish and deconsecrated.)

The Methodist congregation of Brattleboro in the 1870s was a group of modest means, but they had a great desire to build a church of such design that it would reflect positively upon them. To this aim, they secured the services of Warren Hayes of Elmira, New York. Hayes received his B.S. degree in architecture in 1871, the first graduate of Cornell University's School of Architecture.

Hayes became quite successful after he moved to Minneapolis in 1881, and three churches of his design are now on the National Register of Historic Places. His work on the Methodist Church in Brattleboro occurred early in his career when he was still a young man in his early thirties.

According to the descriptive material submitted to create the Downtown Historic District, the church is High Victorian Gothic style. The

northwest tower offers considerable ornamental detail and a rose window with trefoil motif dominates the front gable. The building descends three stories down to the level of Flat Street.

This fine building has been the home of the Brattleboro Center for the Performing Arts, several retail establishments, and now the Hotel Pharmacy. Why is it called the Hotel Pharmacy when it is in a church? It used to be in the Brooks Hotel, but that is another story of Brattleboro's history.

## So Long Montgomery Ward, You Had a Good Run

In 2003, we learned that Montgomery Ward, after 128 years of operation, had reached its end. "Monkey Wards," as it was jokingly called, was once "tops" in American retailing. The Montgomery Ward Catalog was an important part of the reading material in many American households. The company started its mail-order catalog in 1872, opened its first store in 1926, and by 1931, had 531 stores in operation.

Brattleboro became part of this experience when a Montgomery Ward store opened in a new building on Main Street (present site of Brown and Roberts Hardware) in September 1929. It was the second Ward's store to open in Vermont. The building replaced the four-chimney, brick, center-hall colonial home built by Hon. Jonathan Hunt. The former residence was once used as a restaurant and, just before demolition, as an elementary school by St. Michael's Roman Catholic Parish.

The new building, erected by George H. Reed and Company of Greenfield, Mass., was built in two sections, one measuring 50 feet wide and 120 feet deep, two stories high, and occupied by Montgomery Ward, and the other section, to the south, was planned for a non-competing store. A&P occupied this store as did other businesses.

Montgomery Ward operated its Main Street store from 1929 to 1975. Part of this time, it also maintained an auto service operation on Canal Street (present site of Best Muffler). Soon after the Main Street store's closing, a new Montgomery Ward store opened on Putney Road (present site of the Sherwin William's Paint store), but limited its sales to catalog, appliance, and automotive supplies and service. The final closing in Brattleboro occurred in 1985 when the Putney Road operation ended.

"Monkey Wards" was a way of life for the citizens of Brattleboro. Talking to those who worked there gives one an idea of how so much

has changed in the area of retailing in a comparatively short period of time. This was before the days of the superstore or mall store. It was a community store, woven into the fabric of the community's business/shopping district. Many employees, after graduating from Brattleboro High School, worked most of their adult life at Montgomery Ward, taking on more responsible positions as the years passed until they retired. "We were like a family, had good times together, played tricks on one another, enjoyed and were glad to have the job," said Allethaire Smith, who was in charge of the fabric and fashion department. "I arranged a fashion show once. I got some high school girls to be models and thought the show was a big success only to be disappointed when the *Reformer* didn't cover the event. The next day I complained to the editor, only to be told that such coverage would constitute free advertising. I don't know how I thought I was so important with my fashion show, but I did." Harold "Jeff" Barry, who worked at Ward's as a young man, tells of town legend Madame Sherri shopping there. When it came time to pay her bill she stood in front of Jeff, hiked up her skirt and extracted a wad of money from the top of her stocking.

The time when stores had salespeople with familiar faces waiting on their customers has, for the most part, passed; however, it can still be experienced at some of the stores in downtown Brattleboro. The experience is to be savored.

## The Long and Short of Shorthand

**T**he Clawson-Hamilton College Inc. operated in Brattleboro in the Grange block on Elliot Street (number 51).

In 1910 the school offered young men and women interested in careers in typesetting, typing, stenography, dictaphone transcription and other related business office activity an opportunity to develop the necessary skills to secure employment in this field.

"There is an increasing demand for good stenographers," one of the advertisements of the time informed would-be students.

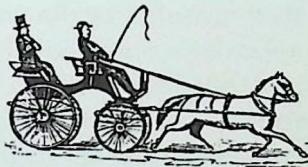
Because of the development of computer technology with personal computers and e-mail changing the form of business communication, stenography is no longer taught at most schools.

Shorthand is simply a form of writing that is compact and allows the writer to be able to keep up with conversational speech. Surprisingly, it was used during the Roman Empire, so one can say that it has had a long run before being replaced by computers.

In 1837 Sir Isaac Pitman developed a shorthand system that was totally phonetic. Vowels are identified by dots and dashes. Arcs, circles, and hooks indicate common prefixes and suffixes. In 1888 John Robert Gregg developed a shorthand system that was not only phonetic but also cursive, designed for easy execution. Both of these systems were taught at the Clawson-Hamilton College in Brattleboro.

Emma Dearborn developed a shorthand system in 1924 that was later revised by Leon Sheff in 1950 that became known as "speedwriting." The system is based on the use of longhand letters.

In October 2000 Paul LeBlanc, president of Marlboro College, announced the opening of a new Technology Center in downtown Brattleboro. So while the Clawson-Hamilton College and much of its curriculum are now part of Brattleboro's history, new schools, offering a curriculum in tune with contemporary times, still find a home in Brattleboro.



## Recording History

The Brattleboro Historical Society celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2002 and the Town of Brattleboro celebrated its 250th anniversary in 2003.

As people live their lives, there is an accumulation of all kinds of facts, dates, and mental images in their personal memory banks. Often, this information is shared with others in the form of an oral history. Just get some conversation going and, in short order, the participants will be bringing their own history to the discussion. If the participants are of similar age, there can be no stopping them.

Along the way, some of this material gets recorded on paper, photographs, and on computers. For the individual, the recording of history gets started with the record of their birth, the birth certificate. For an organization, its charter or by-laws; a political entity, its constitution. An event becomes history as it is happening, and in many cases, a record is made in an attempt to give status and some exactness to the event.

Communities and organizations maintain these records in archives and it is the archivist who keeps them in a manner so that they can be retrieved. Brattleboro has all kinds of places where records are stored. The Town Clerk's office maintains land deeds, birth, death, marriage, and civil union records. The hospital and doctor's offices keep people's medical records. But many historical records are kept by individuals and their families.

People don't think of themselves as historians or recorders of history, but they are. Personal diaries record the events in an individual's life. The family Bible was once a place where marriages, births, and deaths were recorded. Holbrook and Fessenden, publishers in Brattleboro, offered such Bibles in the early 1800s.

When photography arrived in the mid-1800s, images of individuals were recorded and preserved in the form of daguerreotypes and tintypes. They were presented in elaborate cases made of leather with velvet interiors. The family photo album made its appearance soon after, and the family history was then recorded by the placement of photographs of family members, taken by a professional photographer, in the album's pages with captions identifying the photo. The family photo album continues to be used today, but in a much more informal way. People of a certain age can remember the opening scene of a 1950s TV program, *I Remember Mama*, starring Peggy Wood, that showed a family photo album having its pages turned before the camera. In about 30 seconds, the TV viewer was given a photographic history of the Hansen Family.

Baby books, used to record the early life of the family's new addition, have been popular for some time. The reader of this history learns the birth date, weight, gender, color of hair, how much the child ate, how fast they grew, and when they walked and talked for the first time. The arrival of Daniel Robert Amidon in Brattleboro caused his proud father to update the baby book custom by creating a Web site for his new son.

The history of child's growth has been recorded in many a household by having the child stand with their back to a wall or closet door while a pencil mark was made at the location of the top of the child's head along with the date. Of course, this was the one spot in the house that never got painted so as not to destroy the historic record.

Other records such as school yearbooks record and capture moments in a person's time attending school. Wedding albums, some quite elaborate, also serve as a historical record of this special day for a family.

Today, much of this historic record keeping is done with the use of present-day technology. Digital cameras and e-mail allow for instant

recording and transmission of information; however, there is a downside. E-mails and digitized photo images are so easy to produce that they are less likely to be saved. They frequently serve only the moment. Handwritten or typewritten communication between two individuals produced a physical object that often was saved. The letters written between the W.W.II servicemen and their families back home was what enabled Tom Brokaw to write his book *The Greatest Generation*. And while First Lady Bess Truman may have destroyed the love letters Harry had written to her, we have many of the President's other correspondence to read and get a sense of his character. Many remember the following one he wrote in 1950 to the music critic of *The Washington Post*, Paul Hume, who had written a bad review of the President's daughter's piano recital: "When you write such poppycock, it shows conclusively that you're off the beam. Some day I hope to meet you. When that happens you'll need a new nose, a lot of beefsteak for black eyes, and perhaps a supporter below."



## Pages in Time

**M**any Brattleboro citizens regret the loss of the old Brooks Library on Main Street. The building was given to the community by George Brooks, the same gentleman who built the Brooks Hotel shortly after the devastating fire on Main Street in 1869. The library opened in 1886 and remained in service until 1967. It was razed to make room for the post office's parking area. The thought of a new "modern" building had great appeal. This was a period in history when many old buildings were thought to have outlived their usefulness. Central schools, large single-story, flat-roofed buildings, were being constructed in many communities. The old school building was used for other purposes or simply razed.

In 1958 the American Library Association sponsored the first National Library Week to offset the influence of radio and television. The 1960s marked a change in the role that libraries would play in the community. Informal settings, large open areas, and children's rooms, where it was okay for kids to lie on the floor and look at books, were promoted by library schools as a way to meet a community's needs. And indeed it did. Library attendance and book circulation rose during this period. A review of the library board minutes from around the early 1900s shows a concern on the board's part that a greater amount of fiction was being read as opposed to nonfiction. The concern was that people were read-

ing for entertainment rather than self-improvement. In early 2000, the concern is focused on material available on the Internet, according to Jerry Carbone, director of the Brooks Memorial Library.

Starting in the 1920s, the use of the automobile to bring services to people who lived in remote areas and did not own an automobile was growing. Mobil units for chest x-rays, traveling dentists, barber shops, blood drives and child health services were being used and welcomed in these communities. The bookmobile was part of this trend.

Doris Bates was in charge of a bookmobile that the state of Vermont housed in the basement of the old Brooks Library. Deborah Tewksbury, a library employee, remembers Bates at the old library stocking the bookmobile with volumes she knew were popular with the readers of a particular community.

"Long before computers that could tabulate the popularity of a particular book, Miss Bates kept the information in her head," Tewksbury said.

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wasn't too long for it to make its way to Brattleboro. And if it was available in Brattleboro, it wouldn't take long for the big city folk to find out about it.

Indeed the history of this best-kept-secret of a town in the little state with the big heart is dotted with points of achievement, development and perspective that, drawn together, make Brattleboro the vital, energetic town it is. The essays in these pages provide the historical perspective on how it all came to be.

*Jerry Goldberg*  
*Executive Director*  
*Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce*

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